A BRIEFE

EXPOSITION

Of the whole Book of

CANTICLES,

OR,

SONG OF *SOLOMON*:

Lively describing the Estate of the Church in all the Ages thereof, both Jewish and Christian, to this day.

And modestly pointing at the Glorioufneſſe of the restored Estate of the Church of the Jewes, and the happy accesse of the Gentiles, in the approaching dayes of Reformation, when the Wall of Partition shall be taken away.

A Work very usefull and seasonable to every Christian; but especially such as endeavour and thirst after the setling of Church and State, according to the Rule and Patterne of the Word of God.

Written by that Learned and Godly Divine *John Cotton*, Batchelor of Divinity; and now Pastor of the Congregation at *Boston* in *New-England*.

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THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 1.

THe Song of ſongs, which is Solomons.

2 Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth: for thy love is better then wine.

3 Becauſe of the ſavour of thy good ointments, thy Name is as ointment powred forth, therefore doe the Virgins love thee.

4 Draw me, we will run after thee: the King hath brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoyce in thee, we will remember thy love more then wine, the upright love thee.

5 I am blacke, but comely, (O ye daughters of Jeruſalem) as the Tents of Kedar, as the curtaines of Solomon.

6 Looke not upon me becauſe I am blacke, becauſe

the Sunne hath looked upon me: my Mothers children were angry with me, they made me the keeper of the Vineyards, but my own Vineyard have I not kept.

7 Tell me, (O thou whom my ſoule loveth) where thou feedeſt, where thou makeſt thy flocke to reſt at noon: for why ſhould I be as one that turneth aſide by the flocks of thy companions?

8 If thou know not (O thou faireſt among women) goe thy way forth by the footſteps of thy flocke, and feed thy kiddes beſides the ſhepheards tents.

9 I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horſes in Pharaohs chariots.

10 Thy cheeks are comely with rowes of jewels, thy neck with chaines of gold.

11 We will make thee borders of gold, with ſtuds of ſilver.

12 While the King ſitteth at his table, my ſpikenard ſpendeth forth the ſmell thereof.

13 A bundle of myrrhe is my welbeloved unto me, he ſhall lie all night betwixt my breaſts.

14 My beloved is unto me, as a cluſter of Camphire in the Vineyards of En-gedi.

15 Behold, thou art faire my love: behold, thou art faire, and haſt doves eyes.

16 Behold, thou art faire, my beloved, yea, pleaſant: alſo our bed is green.

17 The beames of our houſe are Cedar, and our rafters of firre.

The Explanation.

Cant. 1. ver. 1. *The Song of songs, which is Solomons.*

Ver. 2. *Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth, for thy love is better then wine.*

IT was the manner of ancient times, at Espousalls and Nuptialls to indite and sing * (*Epithalamia*) love-songs: a The title of the 45. Psalme may seeme to be penned by one of the chiefe singers of the Temple, (who now were all of them Prophets; † *Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun,*) upon occasion of *Solomons* marriage with *Pharaohs* daughter; for though shee was a stranger by birth from the common-wealth of Israel, yet his marriage was lawfull with her: And therefore, notwithstanding this marriage, his love to God is still commended, b *Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh King of Egypt, and* c *Solomon loved the Lord, &c.* For indeed herein *Solomon* was,

* Ruth 4. 11, 12.
a Psal. 45.
† 1 Chron. 25. 1. to 5.
b 1 King. 3. 1.
c verse 3.

First, a type of Christ, admitting the Gentiles into the fellowship of his marriage-bed. 1.

Secondly, this *Pharaohs* daughter became 2.

came a Proselyte to the Jewish Religion, d *Hearken (Oh Daughter) and consider, and incline thine eare; forget also thine owne people, and thy fathers house, &c.*

d Psal. 45. 10. — 14.

Now, though that marriage song was penned upon that occasion; yet it ascendeth farre above all earthly respects of worldly marriage, and by a divine and heavenly workmanship sets forth a heavenly marriage-song betweene Christ and his Church: of like Argument was this song penned by *Solomon* himselfe; not to expresse his affections to *Pharaohs* daughter, or hers to him, or the good parts of either of them: no, nor the like respects to any Shunamite amongst the rest of his wives, as some have vainly conceived; for then how absurd and monstrous were some of his comparisons, likening his Spouse to a *company of horses in Pharaohs Chariot, her Head to Carmel, her Eyes to Fish-pooles, her Nose to a Tower, her Teeth to a flock of Sheep, her whole Selfe to a terrible Army with Banners?* But his scope is to describe the estate of the Church towards Christ, and his respect towards her, from his own time to the last judgement, as afterward it shall appeare.

Now,

Now, through this whole marriage-song this *Decorum* it keepeth, that though the calamities of the Church be as well described throughout this song, as the comfortable condition of the same in all ages; yet such dismall passages are vailed and shadowed under some sweet and amiable resemblances, lest the joy of a marriage feast should be darkened by unseasonable mention of so sad occurrences, neither are all the passages of the estate of the Church in every age here described, (for how can that be in so short a song?) but the chiefe heads of things in every age are sweetly, and shortly, and lively, not onely pointed at, but decyphered. These verses contain,

First, the title of the whole book, ver. 1. — The title. 1

Secondly, the description of the estate of the Church in the dayes, First, of *Solomon*, ver. 2.—4. — 2 1

Secondly, of *Solomon* and *Rehoboam*, verse 5. — 2

Thirdly, of *Rehoboam*, verse 6.—9. — 3

In the title we have — Title.

First, the form of the book, It is a *Song*. — 1

Secondly, the excellency of it, A *Song of songs*. — 2

3 Thirdly, the Author of it, *Which is Solomons.*

Col. 3. 6. *The Song of songs, &c.* In *Colos.* 3. 16. there is mention made,

1 Firſt, of Pſalmes.

2 Secondly, Hymnes.

3 Thirdly, ſpirituall Songs.

Pſalmes. Amongſt the Hebrewes there were Pſalmes made to be ſung with Inſtruments, as well as with voyce, and contained arguments of all ſorts, for Petition, Thankeſgiving, and Inſtruction.

Songs. Songs were chiefly made for the voice.

Hymnes. Hymnes are properly praiſes of God: though any of theſe are ſometimes put for all.

Uſe 1. Firſt, this doth let us ſee, that it were to be wiſhed, that this Booke were turned into verſe or meeter in each language, that we might ſing the Canticles as the Hebrewes did.

Uſe 2. Secondly, this teaches us to ſtrive for ſuch a gracious frame of ſpirit, that we might alwayes bee fitted to ſing to God.

This Song containes the eſtate of the Church, as well in the worſt as beſt times; yet *Solomon* can as well ſing in the

the misery of the Church, as in her prosperity. And* *David* hath as well Psalmes of his deep waters and calamities, as of his greatest deliverances. And the holy Ghost saith, ‖ *Rejoyce in the Lord alwayes:* And though singing be chiefly fit and requisite in ‡ mirth, yet we should be fit also for a Psalm in our affliction. But we commonly in our ill houres are too sullen to sing, and in our merry moods, our spirits vanish away in carnall mirth and jolity; but whatsoever the estate of the Church be, we should have our spirits as ready to sing as to pray.

* Psal. 69. 2.

‖ Phil. 4. 4.

‡ Jam. 5. 13.

Thirdly, is reproved that ancient law and custome of the Synagogue, which prohibited young men (under thirty yeares of age) the reading and use of this Booke; but what age fitter for Songs then cheerfull youth? And further, the amorousnesse of the dittie will not stirre up wantonnesse in any age, if the words be well understood: but rather, by inflaming with heavenly love, will draw out, and burne up all earthly and carnall lust; and even as fire in the hand is drawne out by holding it to a stronger fire, or as the light and heat

use 3.

heat of the Sunne extinguiſheth a kitchin fire; ſo doth heavenly love to Chriſt extinguiſh baſe kitchin luſts.

Verſe 1. *A Song of ſongs:* That is, a moſt excellent Song, the chiefeſt of Songs: as when they would expreſſe the holy place, they ſay, The Holy of holieſt, * *The Lord of lords, the King of kings, the Servant of ſervants*, an Hebrew ſuperlative; ſo this is the chiefeſt Song, firſt of all *Solomons* other Songs, even of his thouſand and five.

* Exod. 26 33.

1 King. 4. 32.

Secondly, of all Songs without exception; for though *David* was in his time g the ſweet ſinger of Iſrael, yet as *Solomons* Throne exceeded his in all other magnificence: h ſo did his Name exceed his alſo; yet this is no diſparagement to the other Songs; ſo neither, that ſome of *Davids* Pſalmes ſhould be ſtiled † golden Pſalmes: i All purified gold; yet ſome gold wrought more exquiſitely then others, and finer engraven then others; even ſome portion of the pure and holy Word of God, more exquiſitely penned and poliſhed then other.

g 2 Sam. 23. 1.

h 1 King. 1. 47.

† Pſal. 16. 56, 57, 58, 59.

i Pſa. 12. 6

Reaſon 1. The firſt Reaſon why this Song is more excellent then others, is, becauſe this Song ſpeaketh not onely of the chiefeſt

chiefeſt matter, to wit, Chriſt and his Church; but alſo more largely then any of *Davids* Pſalmes, and with more ſtore of more ſweet and precious, exquiſite and amiable reſemblances, taken from the richeſt Jewels, the ſweeteſt Spices, Gardens, Orchards, Vineyards, Wine-cellars, and the chiefeſt beauties of all the workes of God and man.

Secondly, this Song admitteth more varietie of interpretation then any other, and alſo of ſingular uſe: ſome have applied it to expreſſe the mutuall affection and fellowſhip between Chriſt and every Chriſtian ſoule; ſome betweene Chriſt and the Catholique Church; ſome to particular Churches, from *Solomons* time to the laſt judgement. And there is an holy and uſefull truth in each one of theſe interpretations; but the laſt doth exceedingly magnifie the wonderfull excellency of this Song, making it a divine abridgement of the Acts and Monuments of the Church. And that this book was chiefly penned to be ſuch an hiſtoricall Propheſie or Propheticall hiſtory, may appeare, Reaſon 2.

First, by the correſpondency, or ſu- 1

tableneſſe

ſutableneſſe of the words of this Song, to the events of each age.

2 Secondly, by the repetition of the ſame deſcription, and other occurrences in divers parts of this Song; which would be a needleſſe tautologie, if it were ſpoken of the ſame perſons in the ſame time; as you may ſee if you compare *Chap.* 4. 2. with 6. 6. and 2. 7. with 3. 5. and 8. 4. 3. 6. with 8. 5.

Reaſon 3. Thirdly, by the diverſities of deſcriptions of ſome perſons, which would intimate and imply a contradiction, if they were not ſpoken of ſeverall times and ſeverall perſons.

Chap. 3. 3. 6. with Ch. 5. 7, 8, 9.

Reaſon 4. Chap. 3. 6. and 6. 10. and 8. 5. Uſe 1. Fourthly, by the ſudden admiration of ſome new perſons and occurrences.

Firſt, wee may here ſee, the eldeſt ſonne of Wiſdome giveth the double portion of excellency to this Song above all others; yea, ſince the holy Ghoſt giveth it, it is not therefore onely Canonicall Scripture, but an eminent portion of it. It were prophane blaſphemy to preferre this Song above other Songs of holy Scripture, if it were not alſo given by divine inſpiration as well as they: to preferre the invention of man

man before the wisdome of God were sacrilegious madnesse. And although none of Gods ten proper names in Hebrew be once mentioned in this Song, yet that impeacheth not the authority of this Booke more then it doth of *Hester*, where no name of God is mentioned at all. Besides, this Booke is full of such names of God as sute more with the arguments; as *Welbeloved*, *Brother*, *Shepheard*, *O thou whom my soule loveth*, *the chiefest of ten thousand*. Chap. 1. 7, 8, 9, and 5. 10.

Secondly, this must exhort us to a more studious reading and meditating of this Book, as of a most excellent portion of holy Writ. use 2.

Thirdly, this shewes us, that as this Scripture is Canonicall, so the Pen-man of it is a Canonicall Saint in Heaven; for hee must needs be so, according to that (not of *Peters* successor, as the Papists would have it) but of S. *Peter* himselfe: k *Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost*: so that hee must needs be a Saint by S. *Peters* confession; and not he onely, but Christ himselfe saith, l *All the Prophets are in the kingdome of God.* Now, all the Prophets came not neere this use 3. k 2 Pet. 1. 21. l Luke 13. 28.

this Prophet; and there was no Scripture but it was penned by a Propheticall and Apostolicall spirit; and though *Solomon* did fall, yet m *If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, &c.* Verse 15. *But my mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.* If some say, By this it was meant that God would not take away his kingdom; to this it is answered, he did take it away, but he would not deale with him as he dealt with *Saul*: so then this telleth us *Solomon* is a Saint in Heaven.

m 2 Sam. 7.14,15.

The text Ver. 1.

[*Which is Solomons.*] *Solomon* the penner of it, but a wiser then *Solomon* indited it. The holy Ghost maketh choice of his Instruments according to the use he had to put them to; to set forth the estate of his Church by the choicest treasures of nature: hee useth *Solomons* spirit, which n was as large as the sand of the sea shore. And as God led *Moses* to the top of mount Pisgah, to behold all the places and situations of Israel: so he lifted up *Solomons* spirit to the mountain of Activitie, (that I may so speake) where onely all times to come are present, to behold the estate of the Church throughout the present, and all after times.

n 1 King. 4 29,30. Deut. 34. 1.—4.

This

This is to teach us, as it was ſaid before, that *Solomon* is a canonized Saint, elſe he had not beene a Pen-man of Canonicall Scripture, canonized not by *Peters* pretended ſucceſſors, who have ſhamefully erred in this kinde; but by * *Peter* himſelfe, yea, by a greater then *Peter* or *Solomon*, even ° Chriſt Jeſus: That promiſe ᵖ reacheth further then to preferre *Solomon* before *Saul*, in reſerving the kingdome to his poſterity, which he tooke from *Saul*; for even from *Solomons* poſterity, the kingdome was cut off in *Jechoniah*: the promiſe therefore of mercy to *Solomon* above *Saul*, reacheth to the beſtowing of an heavenly kingdome upon him. Beſides, in that place two bleſſings are promiſed,

Uſe 1.

* 2 Pet. 1. 21.
° Luke 13 28.
ᵖ 2 Sam. 7 14, 15.

2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14.

First, Adoption, *I will be his father, &c.* 1

Secondly, eſtabliſhment in Gods houſe and kingdome: ſo that if the latter promiſe ſhould not evince his perſeverance, yet the former doth. 2

Secondly, this is to ſtirre us up to the reading and meditation of this Booke, the more for the Pen-mans ſake. Uſe 2.

The 2, 3, & 4. verſes ſing and ſhew forth the eſtate of the Church in *Solomons* time.

time. Verse 5. the estate of the Church as well in *Solomons* time as in *Rehoboams*. The verses following to the ninth, the estate of the Church in all the time of *Rehoboam*.

Solomons time foure things.

In the Church of *Solomons* time, foure passages are chiefly observable.

1

First, *Solomons* choyce of heavenly wisdome, by which chiefly wee enjoy sweet and familiar fellowship with God, q 1 *King*. 3. 5. to 10. This is expressed, verse 2.

q Prov. 8. 34. 35.

2

Verse 3.

Secondly, the sweet savour and fame of *Solomons* gifts and graces, to the winning of the love and admiration of the sons of men.

3

Verse 4.

Thirdly, the drawing and gathering of all Israel to the Kings chambers, the courts of *Solomons* Temple: or his care to bring on his people to the publick Worship of God, and their respect of him in regard thereof.

4

Verse 5.

Fourthly, the fall and deformity of the Church, by Idolatrous worship, and toleration thereof in many; and yet the keeping of the native beauty of the Church in many others.

Verse 2.

[*Let him kisse me with the kisses of his mouth,*

mouth, &c.] It is a prayer of the Church, or (which is all one) some chiefe member of it, for a pledge of Christs sweet and familiar acquaintance, and love, and fellowship with her: *Kisses* are pledges and incentives of love. r *Men shall kisse his lips that answereth upright words.* This is the effect of upright Answers, men kisse his lips; but God kissing a mans lips, is the cause of mans answering upright words; his breathing into our mouths a right answer, maketh us speake accordingly: as, on the contrary, when one answers perversly, unjustly, erroneously, Satan then hath kissed them with his kisses, hee hath sitten as a * lying spirit in their mouths.

r Pro. 24. 26.

* 1 King. 22. 23, 24.

[*The kisses of his mouth,*] which is more then the *kisses of his lips*; the one is a silent gesture of love, the other implyeth also amiable speeches, when Christ,

First, by the voyce of his Word, or 1

Secondly, by the breath of his spirit, doth either, 2

First, put wisdome or grace into our hearts, or 1

Pſal. 119. 98.—110.

Secondly, speake peace or comfort to our soules. 2

[s] Isa. 57. 19.

[s] *I create the fruit of the lips, peace, peace, &c. Solomons* wisdome is the grace of God, as wickedness is folly;

[t] Prov. 1 7.

[t] *The beginning of this wisdome is the feare of God,*

[u] Eccles. 12. 13.

[u] *the end of it is the keeping of Gods Commandements.* This wisdome who so findes, findes Christ,

* Pro. 8. 22. 35. Mat. 3. 17.

* the wisdome of the Father, in whom God is well pleased with us, and in whom he (as it were) kisseth us: this wisdome doth not only enable us to walk godlily to our salvation, but likewise fits us to goe in and out before our families, before our people, and so enlarges us to all duties of our callings: And to walk in the wayes of this wisdome, brings peace to our soules, and to those that live under us.

[y] Pro. 3. 17

[y] *All her paths are peace.*

For thy love is better then wine.] The favour of God in giving wisdome, and thereby peace to a mans selfe and others depending on him, is more worth then wine; (that is) then whatsoever makes the heart of man

* Psa. 104. 15. & 4. 6, 7. Pro. 3. 13. —15. & 31. 6, 7. Jud. 9. 13.

* glad. This prayer was powred out by *Solomon*, the chiefest member of the Church in this time, when he prayed for wisdome,

† 1 King. 3 5, 9, 11. 2 Chron. 1. 7, 10, 11. Pro. 16. 10

† and preferred it before long life, riches, victory over his enemies, &c.

Or

Or elſe this whole verſe may expreſſe the deſire of the Church to *Solomon*, that he would expreſſe his love to her by his divine Sentences, * and Bookes, and Songs, which are better then their civill peace, † then the ſitting under their own Vine and Fig-tree.

* Eccleſ. 12.9.

† 1 Kin.4. 25.

Becauſe of the ſavour of thy good oyntments.] Good ointments are the gifts and graces of Gods Spirit, [a] *But the anointing which ye have received of him, &c.* ſo called, becauſe they heale a broken heart as [b] oyle: the oyle of Gods grace heals the bruiſes of the ſoule.

Verſe 3.

a Joh.2 27

b Luke 10. 34. Iſa.61.3.

Secondly, as oyle doth make the face to ſhine, [c] ſo doe they.

c Pſa.104 15.

Thirdly, [d] as by the holy oyles all the veſſels of the Tabernacle were conſecrated; ſo by theſe graces all the veſſels of mercy are conſecrated to God.

Eccl. 8. 1.

d Exo.10. 23.31.

Fourthly, by the oyntment were anointed to their offices [e] Kings, [f] Prieſts, [g] and ſome Prophets; [h] ſo by theſe graces are we anointed to God our Father in Chriſt, [i] Kings, Prieſts, and Prophets. Savour is the manifeſtation of theſe graces, as oyntments are manifeſted by their ſavour.

e 1 Sam. 16.3. & 10 1.

f Exod.40 13,15.

g 1 King. 19.16.

h Act.1.8. & 2.4,7.

i Rev. 1.6. Joh 11.3.

Thy name is as an oyntment powred forth.] Verſe 3.

That is, precious, sweet, and famously renowned; *Therefore doe the Virgins love thee.* The Virgins in this Song are such as Christ hath not yet espoused to himselfe, k nor spoken for in way of marriage; l such as carnall Jewes, or the Gentiles.

k Can. 8. 8
l Can. 6. 8

Verse 3.

Love thee.] That is,

First, honourably esteem thee.

Secondly, affect thy sight and fellowship.

Thirdly, seeke after thee. m This was fulfilled in *Solomon:* his owne people reverenced him, even all of them; his name was famous in all nations round about him: all the Kings sent to him, and of all people, some came to hear his wisdome. n The Queen of Sheba cometh from the uttermost parts of the earth to heare it, & counteth his people happy under it: *Hiram* King of Tyre blessed God for his wisdom.

m 1 King. 28. & 4. 31, 34. & 5. 7. & 10. 1, 7, 8, 9.

n 1 King. 10. 1, 2.

o 1 King. 5. 7.

Verse 4.

Draw me.] It may well be the speech of *Solomon* to Christ, praying that Christ would draw him to the Father, neer unto him in holy duties, and promising to bring all the People to run with him after God. Or it may be the speech of the Church to *Solomon*, desiring him to draw them together, by publick edicts and pro-

proclamations, to the ſolemne duties of Gods worſhip, and promiſing to come freely, to runne together willingly in the times of ſuch aſſemblies; which was done [p].

p 2 Chro. 2. 2, 3. Verſe 4.

The King hath brought me into his chambers.] That is, into thoſe bride-chambers, where Chriſt familiarly converſeth with them; which were three.

Firſt, the Tabernacle at Gibeon.

Secondly, the Ark at Jeruſalem.

Thirdly, the Temple.

Into theſe, [q] *Solomon* brought the whole congregation of Iſrael to ſolemne ſacrifices.

q 2 Chro. 1. 2.—6. 1 King. 8. 5.—14. —63.

The words following in this verſe, ſhew a three-fold reſpect which the people beare to *Solomon*.

Firſt, they rejoyced in him.

Secondly, they remember his love better then wine.

Thirdly, the upright love him.

Their rejoycing in him, is recorded [r]: their remembrance of his love more then wine, is there alſo implied; for departing from the meeting with ſuch glad hearts, they afterward remembred the comfort thereof, as more bleſſed then the peace-

r 1 King. 8. 66.

able living under their owne Vine and Fig-tree. The love of the upright to him continued all his time, even when his wives, and hollow-hearted subjects flattered him, and enticed him to toleration of Idolatrie.

But consider further, that *Solomon*, when hee is here set forth as the desire, praise, and blessednesse of all his people, he is then a type of Christ, greater then
Verse 2. *Solomon*; whose heavenly fellowship and instruction, the Church desires above wine: whose graces are excellent, and procuring him love and renowne, of whom the Church prayeth to be drawn, and who leadeth us to fellowship with God in holy worship; whom therefore the people rejoyce in, and remember his love above wine: the upright love him.

Use 1. This, first doth shew us the happy estate of a Church or Common-wealth, when men of place labour not for preferments or worldly profits, for honour or long life, but for wise and understanding hearts, that may go in and out before the people in their callings; when they desire to be kissed with the kisses of Gods mouth, that he would breath into them such

ſuch graces as be needfull for their places.

Secondly, this ſheweth what procures a Magiſtrate love and reputation; when, being inriched with Gods graces, as ſweet oyntments, hee manifeſteth the ſweet ſavour thereof in all his adminiſtrations. If any man deſire a good name, if any man deſires love and reſpect, thit is the way to get it; fill your hearts with the good gifts and graces of God; let Gods grace ſhew forth it ſelfe in your ſpeeches, in your anſwers, in your practices; this oyntment will be ſtronger to get a good name, then any other noyſom thing to hinder it. The Virgins will love you, for they rejoyce at your faith; [ſ] *And by faith our elders were well reported of.* By theſe, *Solomon* got a good name all the world over. Uſe 2. [ſ] Heb. 11. 2

Thirdly, this is to teach a Magiſtrate to draw on the people to holy duties, by all meanes he can, by his Proclamations, Lawes, and Examples. Uſe 3.

Fourthly, to ſhew that the greateſt comfort of ſubjects, and the ſtrongeſt love to knit them in all hearty affections to their Prince, is his forwardneſſe in drawing them on, and leading them an Uſe 4.

end to the holy duties of Gods worſhip.

Verſe 4. *Draw me, and I will runne after thee.*] If *Solomon* once be drawne, all the people will come after rejoycing, when they ſhall ſee the Magiſtrate come.

Uſe 5. Fifthly, to ſhew us a ſigne of a true ſpouſe of Chriſt; ſuch a one preferreth

Verſe 2. fellowſhip with him above all things, delighting in his company, in his ordinances. Thus did *Paul*, [d] *I count all things loſſe and droſſe for Chriſt.* So *David*, [e] *Whom have I in heaven but thee?*

Text Ver. 5. to 9. *I am blacke, yet comely, &c.*

In theſe verſes is deſcribed the eſtate of the Church.

Verſe 5. Firſt, of Iſrael and Judah, in the laſt dayes of *Solomon*, and then of *Rehoboam.*

Verſe 6. Secondly, of Judah alone.

Ver. 7, 8. Thirdly, of Iſrael alone after the Apoſtaſie of the ten tribes.

Verſe 9. Fourthly, of Judah alone, in reſpect of his civill condition under the ſervice of the King of Egypt.

Verſe 5. *I am blacke, &c.*] The Church is ſet forth by a double adjunction, the one contrary to the other; *I am black*, yet *comely*; and both theſe by compariſon:

Blacke. Firſt, *black, as the tents of Kedar.*

Secondly,

d Phil. 3. 7, 8.

e Pſal. 73. 25.

Secondly, *comely*, *as the curtaines* or hangings *of Solomon*.

First, *black*, by the fall of *Solomon* g.

Secondly, by the folly of *Rehoboam* h.

Thirdly,

1. By Profaneneſſe.
2. By Schiſme.
3. By Apoſtaſie.
4. By the Rebellion of the ten tribes i.

Yet comely,] First, by the preſent purity of Gods ordinances in the Temple k.

Secondly, the conſtancy of the upright in cleaving to God, to the King, to the houſe of God, and *David*; the which was done in profeſſion by whole Judah and Benjamin, and the Iſraelites inhabiting in the Cities of Judah, but in truth, by the upright l.

Yee Daughters of Jeruſalem, &c.] Children of the Church are called Daughters rather then Sons, as being prepared as a pure Virgin for Chriſt their husband m.

As the tents of Kedar, &c.] That is, of the Arabians, who were called Scenith, or Nomede, for that they wandred up and downe, feeding their flockes in tents,

g 1 King. 11.4,9.
h 1 King. 12.14,15.
i 1 Kin. 12. 16,18,19.
Comely.
k Pſal. 48. 1,2.
2 Chr. 13. 10,—12.
l 1 Kin. 12. 17,20,23.
m 2 Cor. 11.2.

tents, which they made of Goats haire; a courſe ſtuff of it ſelfe, and being weather-beaten, the more homely and black: Hereto the Prophet alludeth when he calleth the Church of Iſrael n Aholah, and Jeruſalem Aholibah, my tent in her: for ſhe was then *as the curtains of Solomon.*

n Ezek. 23. 4.

It was *Davids* griefe * that he was long converſant in the tents of Kedar: the Church was now like to theſe tents,

* Pſa. 120. 5.

Firſt, in their blackneſſe, which reſembled their adverſity.

Secondly, in that ſhe now lived among the enemies of her peace, the ſons of her mother being angry with her.

Thirdly, in that blacke and ſad defection which laid the foundation of the after Captivity, when the Church wandred to Babel; her tent being removed *as the curtaines of Solomon*, or, hangings; having the name from the coupling together. † *Joſephus* ſaith, that *Solomons* hals were hung with hanging of Babylonian tapeſtrie in their courſes or ſuits, and the wall of Marble underneath moſt curiouſly wrought with rich Imagerie. It ſeemeth alſo, each hanging inwardly more rich then other. Such was the

* Hortenſis Flavius Joſeph. Ant. 2. 8

eſtate

estate of the Church in time of publicke defection, pure and richly graced in the upright members, whom the better one inwardly knew, the more gracious they appeared.

Look not upon me, because I am black, &c.] Verse 6.

This verse hath two parts: Two parts

First, an admonition of the Church of Judah to the daughtets of Jerusalem, not to despise her, nor alienate themselves from her in regard of her blackness: or, as it is in the Hebrew, *Because I am she that am blacke.*

Secondly, a rendring a threefold Reason:

First, of her blackness.

Secondly, of their not despising her for it.

A third Reason is,

First, from the highest cause of her affliction, *The sun hath looked upon me.*

Secondly, from the instrumentall cause, the anger of her mothers children against her.

Thirdly, for the meritorious cause, which shee acknowledgeth was wholly in her selfe; her not keeping well her own vineyard, aggravated by the divers degrees,

degrees, though they made her the keeper of the vineyards.

Verſe 6. *Look not upon me.*] That is,

Firſt, with a ſcorching eye, Sun-burning me, making me ſtill more blacke by your diſdaine and ſeparation; as the Sun is ſaid to looke upon, that is, with a ſcorching eye.

Secondly, with a piercing eye, as the Vultures doe, whereof *Job* ſpeaketh [o], uſing the ſame word here uſed of the Sun, which ſpieth out what he may faſten upon, any corruption or carrion.

[o] Job 28.7

Verſe 6. *The Sunne.*] That is, God [p] hath looked upon me with a ſcorching eye, in diſpleaſure; for he was angry with *Solomon*. [q] It came not by chance, or civill cauſes in polity, but by divine procurement; and therefore the daughters of Jeruſalem to make ſuch an uſe of it as not to alienate themſelves the more from God by it: that which cometh from God ſhould draw us neerer to God; He did it to ſet us more Kings in the Common-wealth, as *Solomon* had more Gods in the Church.

[p] Pſal. 84. 11.

[q] 1 Kin. 11 9. & 12. 24

Verſe 6. *The ſonnes of my mother were angry with mee.*] That is, the ten tribes were offended: [r] yea this anger of the tribes was exceſſive,

[r] 1 King. 12. 16.

ceſſive, when it brake forth into ſuch extremity; and therefore they rather to be reproved, then the Church diſdained.

They made me the keeper of the Vines.] Firſt, God [s].

Secondly, all the tribes [t].

Of the Vines.] That is, of all the Churches [u].

But mine owne Vineyard have I not kept.] That is, not the Churches of Judah and Jeruſalem, Idolatry and Superſtition creeping in.

No not the Vines of mine own houſe, my wives * from falling to Idolatry, and ſeducing my ſelfe to toleration of it.

Tell me, Oh thou, &c.] This verſe containeth,

Firſt, a Prayer of the faithfull diſperſed throughout the ten tribes, and commanded by *Jeroboam* to goe no more to worſhip at Jeruſalem, but to goe to Dan and Bethel, deſiring to know whither to reſort to find Chriſt feeding his ſheep [a] *that heare his voyce.*

Secondly, a Reaſon to prevent her turning aſide to ſuperſtitious worſhip, by following ſuch Teachers as will not be ſubordinate to Chriſt, depending upon his

[s] 1 Chron. 28. 4.— 6.
[t] 2 Sam. 5. 3.
[u] Pſ. 80. 8. Iſa. 5. 1. Mat. 21. 33
*Pſ. 128. 3
Verſe 7.
[a] John 10. 27, 28.

his direction; but companions with him, uſurping to preſcribe with like authority as himſelfe in his worſhip [b].

b 1 King. 12. 28,31. Verſe 8.

If you know not.] This verſe containeth Chriſts anſwer: where obſerve,

Firſt, a Compellation, *Oh thou faireſt amongſt women.*

Secondly, a Suppoſition, *If thou knoweſt not:* as if he ſhould ſay, it is much thou ſhouldeſt not know.

Thirdly, a Direction to follow in this caſe,

Firſt, the footſteps of the true ſheep of Chriſt, who went up all to Jeruſalem [c].

c 2 Chro. 11.13,14, 16.

Secondly, the tents of the Shepheards, the lawfull Prieſts, who were there alſo: [d] There they feed the kids and young ones, who elſe might in time grow rammiſh and rank with ſuperſtitious and bad Miniſters.

d 2 Chro. 13.10, 11.

Verſe 9. *I have compared thee.*] Here the civill eſtate of the Church of Judah is deſcribed; for after that the recourſe of the faithfull Prieſts and Levites had ſtrengthned the hand of *Rehoboam*, * he fell away, and moſt of Iſrael with him: wherefore God ſent *Pharaoh Shiſhak* (for all the Kings of Egypt were called *Pharaohs*) to ſubdue

* 2 Chro. 11.17. & 12.1,2. 2 Chro. 12 2,8,9. ver. 8,9.

ſubdue them to his ſervice. So then the Church of Judah is here ſet forth,

Firſt, by her ſervice to *Pharaoh*, as if, like horſes, they drew in *Pharaohs* triumphant chariot [d]. *Joſephus* ſaith, this *Shiſhak* was *Seſoſtris*, of whom *Herodotus* ſpeakes: yea, of him ſaith *Diodorus Siculus*, that he cauſed Kings as horſes to draw in his chariots. d 2 Chro. 12.8.

Secondly, by her acceptance to God in this ſervice; *I have compared thee to the company of my horſes:* and ſo in the Hebrew, becauſe they had ſubmitted themſelves under Gods juſt hand [e]. If *Solomon* had ſpoken of any of his wives or concubines, it had been a monſtrous and abſurd compariſon to liken them to coach-horſes. Alſo becauſe this is a marriage-ſong, he ſetteth downe expreſly no diſmall thing to interrupt bride-chamber joy, but vaileth the ſervice under this magnificent compariſon darkly. e 2 Chro. 12.6, 12.

This ſhewes us what it is that makes the Church blacke, wherein the deformity of it ſtands, in the fall and ſins of the people, and of the Princes, in declining to Idolatry in their folly, ſchiſmes, and rents from their mother; profaneneſſe, apoſtaſie, Uſe 3.

ſtaſie, and rebellion in the Church and Common-wealth. Theſe doe darken the faireſt Churches.

If *Solomon* ſhall ſet up other Gods, God will ſet up forain Princes in his kingdome. If he and his people will ſerve other gods, God will cauſe his Princes to draw in forain Princes chariots: if we be at unity with other gods, God will be at enmity with us.

Vſe 2. Secondly, this doth ſhew us there may be a true comely Church in the middeſt of ſuch deformities, yet the true Church of God in the greateſt darkneſs is alwaies comely. It is not the ſins of Princes and people that can take away the Churches comelineſſe; they may bring blackneſſe upon her, like *to the tents of Kedar:* but draw theſe curtaines aſide, and you ſhall finde that Gods Church is comely, like to the *curtains of Solomon.* Run we not therefore from the Church becauſe of her blackneſſe, but run to her, and embrace her in her moſt ſad defections.

Vſe 3. Thirdly, to teach the children of the Church not to ſeparate from the Church for corruption ſake; not to looke onely at her corruptions, but to ſee her comeli-

neſſe

neſſe alſo; and not adde affliction to the afflicted: much leſſe are we to think they in Bohemia, and in the Palatinate, are no Churches, for that they are now ſunne-burnt. The ſun, even God, hath looked upon them; and it is not their mothers children, but the baſtards of the Roman Harlot have been angry with her. Let us not then look at them with a vultures eye, as though we would behold nothing but corruption and carrion: nor with a ſcorching eye, make them more black: but with a child-like eye, to pity them for their calamity and blackneſſe which is befallen them.

Fourthly, obſerve that the calamities of the Church ſpring not out of the duſt, but it is God that cauſeth darkneſſe upon the Church: yea, to ſpeake reverently, it is he that lookes at her with a ſcorching eye; he ſearcheth her ſinnes, and, finding them out, doth blaſt her that ſhe is tann'd and ſun-burnt. If then it be Gods hand, let us pity the Church ſo much the more, and ſtrive with God to renew the light of his countenance upon her. Uſe 4.

Fifthly, it was a ſin in them to be angry with the Church, as ſome of the Se- Uſe 5.

paration are, and doe depart from us; and it is not a little ſinne and fault in us to deſpiſe other Churches in diſtreſſe. What and if ſome caſt off England, ſhall we reject it becauſe ſome of the ſons of her mother do ſo? How much leſſe then when the ſons, not of a mother but of a harlot, hate the Churches beyond the ſeas? ſhall we then reject the Church? God forbid.

Uſe 6. Sixthly, this teacheth us concerning *Solomon*, that,

Firſt, he repented of his fall, acknowledged his being wanting of keeping his owne Vine: and,

Secondly, he wrote this Song after his fall and repentance: elſe, if he had foretold his fall, and repentance before it was done, it might ſeem like the Jeſuites Popiſh repentance, who confeſſe to their Prieſts their ſinne before they commit it. But he penned it after his fall, to aſſure us the more of his ſalvation, which ſome make doubt of.

Uſe 7. Seventhly, this ſhewes us, ſuch ſoules are the faireſt and moſt beautifull in Chriſts eyes as (not reſting in the commandements of governments touching matter of Religion, but) doe ſeeke for the true

true Church and pure worſhip of God, and follow it, though with neglect of their * ſuburbs and poſſeſſions. Chriſt calleth thoſe the faireſt among women who here enquire after him, and ſell † all to follow him: ſo theſe that want meanes of ſalvation at home, are deſirous to ſeek after them, and where they finde them, there they goe; and part with any thing to enjoy the purity of Gods worſhip and ordinances: theſe in Gods account are the worthieſt Chriſtians.

* 2 Chron. 13. 14, 16.
† Mat. 19. 21, 27. Luke 18. 22, 28. Mark 10. 21, 28.

Eightly, here is ſhewed two markes of the true Church of God; doe any doubt whether God be God or Baal, and do halt between two opinions, not knowing whether to joyn with Rome or England? Goe then out by the foot-ſteps of the flockes; where the faithfull hearing Chriſts voice reſort, and will not heare any voyce but Chriſts, follow thoſe: now times are ſuch (bleſſed be God) as every one may finde out where the Church is; but in the caſe of blackneſs and darkneſs, enquire then,

Uſe 8.

1 Kin. 18. 21.

Verſe 8.

Firſt, for ſuch as will heare no voyce but Chriſts, and follow then the foot-ſteps of the flocke: ſee where they feed, there joyne your ſelves.

Secondly, where you find faithfull Miniſters, Prieſts, as *Aarons* ſons, and Levites anointed with heavenly graces; thither carry your kids, there plant your families to be fed under ſuch ſhepheards.

Uſe 9. Verſe 9. Laſtly, wee may ſee here when the Church neglects Gods ſervice, God gives her up to the ſervice of forain Princes, to draw as horſes in *Pharaohs* chariots: and yet being humbled for this, God wil have mercy on her, and ſo diſpoſe of it, that her ſervice ſhall not be baſe, for God will make them to draw his yoke, though they draw it in the yoke of forain Princes, as *Rehoboam* and his people did f.

f 2 Chro. 12. 2, 4. 8, 9.

Verſe 10. to end. *Thy cheeks are comely with rowes of jewels.*] The eſtate of the Church is here deſcribed, as it was in the dayes of *Abijam*, in theſe words, *Thy cheekes are comely with jewels*; and as it was in the dayes of *Aſa*, both in the ſame words, and in the words following to the end of Verſe 11.

Thy cheeks.] That is, the outward face of the Church are comely with rowes of jewels: that is, with keeping their right place and order, and manner of Gods owne ordinances.

This *Abijam* proclaimeth himſelf to all the

the houſe of Iſrael: [g] *But as for us* (ſaith he) *the Lord is our God, we have not forſaken him; the Prieſts which miniſter unto the Lord are the ſons of Aaron; and the Levites waite upon that buſineſſe, and they burne unto the Lord every morning and every evening burnt ſacrifices and ſweet incenſe: the ſhew-bread alſo they ſet in order upon the pure table.*

g 2 Chro. 13.10,11, 12.

It was not ſo with the Houſe of Iſrael, though *Abijahs* heart was not ſo upright as *Davids* [h]; yet the outward face of the Church, her cheekes (as it were) were comely with the orderly keeping and obſerving the ordinances of God: yea, and comely alſo was the face of the Church looking up to God in diſtreſſe, [i] which moved him to deliver you from *Ieroboam*.

Verſe 8,9. h 1 K ng 15. 3.

i 2 Chro. 13.12,18.

Thy neck with chaines of gold.] Verſe 10.

Chaines of gold are wholeſome lawes, binding like chaines, to keep the worſhip of God and true Religion pure as gold; ſuch lawes are called chaines. [k] This was done in the dayes of *Aſa*, when he removed the Altars of the ſtrange gods, pulling down the high places, breaking the Images, and cutting down the Groves; commanded Judah to ſeeke the Lord God of their fathers, and the people willingly

k Pſ. 149. 8.

submitted themselves [l] to enter into a covenant or law, that upon pain of death all the people should seek the Lord onely.

We will make thee.] This sheweth the forwardnesse of the people to joyne with *Asa* in reforming Religion, and adorning the Church, as is recorded [m].

Borders of gold.] That is, the borders of the kingdome, pure as gold by cleansing and putting away all the Idols out of all quarters of Judah, yea, and of Benjamin also, and mount Ephraim, the very skirts and frontiers, and borders of the kingdome [n].

Studs of silver.] In workes of gold, are such eminent knobs as adorne the workes with variety of colours, and metall, and workmanship [o].

Such like eminent works which did adorn *Asa's* reformation of the Church, even to the very borders, were these three.

First, his renewing of the Altars of the Lord before the Porch [p].

Secondly, the deposing of his mother from her Regency, for her Idolatrie sake, and defacing her Idoll [q].

Thirdly, the consecrating, and bringing into Gods house, his fathers and his own dedi-

l 2 Chro. 14.1,3,4, 5.& 15. 12.—15. Verse 11.

m 2 Chro. 15.10, 16. Verse 11.

n 2 Chro. 15.8. Verse 11.

o Pro. 15. 11.

3. Things.

p 2 Chro. 15. 8.

q 2 Chro. 15.16.

dedicated Vessels of gold and silver [r]. [r] 2 Chro. 15. 18. Verse 12.

While the King sitteth at his table.] That is, whiles *Iehosaphat* sits at rest and peace, refreshing himselfe at home, [s] God establishing his kingdome in his hand, and giving him riches & honors in abundance. [s] 2 Chro. 17. 15.

My spikenard.] An ointment of all others most precious, * of all other spices *spikenard* is of greatest estimation. This the Apostle *Iohn* calleth very costly, wherewith our Saviour Christ was anointed by *Mary*. Verse 12. * Plin. lib. 11. ca. 12. Idem ibid.

By *spikenard* is here meant the preaching of the Word, which is of all savours the most precious, even the savour of life unto life. 2 Cor. 2. 16.

When *Iehosaphat* was established in rest and peace, he sent forth the Priests and Levites, to carry the sweet savour of the word throughout all the cities of Judah [†]. [†] 2 Chro. 17. 8, 9. Verse 13.

A bundle of myrrh.] Myrrh is an odoriferous tree, that sweateth out a sweet gumme called *Stacte*, which is preferred before all others. Plin. lib. 12. ca. 16.

This gum is also called from the tree Myrrh, his smell is strong and fragrant; and fit to preserve from putrefaction; and it is of much use in embalming, and God himself recounteth it amongst the principall spices [t]. [t] Exod. 30. 23.

Verse 13. 1 Pet. 2. 2.

Betweene my breasts.] The breasts are those that give milk, the sincere milke of the Word to the Churches children, to wit, the Priests and Levites. These when *Jehosaphat* sent forth to give milke to the cities of Judah, he sent with them a company of Noblemen, religious Princes, who added the more authority to the Priests and Levites, and are therefore themselves said to teach in the cities of Judah [t]. Thus these Princes were as a bundle of Myrrh amongst the Priests and the Levites, to decide all controversies amongst the people, both in matters concerning God and the King; to preserve the people, and one another free from corruption in all matters, whether of Religion or civill Justice [u]. Yea, and *Jehosaphat* himselfe representing Christ the Churches welbeloved upon earth, he rested in the bosome of the Church as a bundle of Myrrh, sweet, and strongly preserving the people from corruption: from Beersheba to mount Ephraim hee went about, throughout all the people, to bring them backe againe to the purity of Gods worship *.

t 2 Chro. 17. 7.

u 2 Chro. 19. 5. —12.

* 2 Chro. 19. 3, 4.

Verse 14.

As a cluster of camphire.] Camphire is a

a shrub for smell like unto spikenard, wasting the obstruction of the spleene, and by the very smell of it making men *vegetiores*, and *firmiores*, more lively and more strong; yea, and available also against the biting of serpents: such was Christ to his Church, when the children of *Moab* and *Ammon*, and mount *Seir*, gathered themselves together against the children of Israel in Engedi; for by the ministry of *Jehaziel*, he made *Jehosaphat* and his people,

Plin. lib. 21. ca. 18.

2 Chron. 20. 12.

First, more strong in faith, to rest on God and his Word.

2 Chron. 20. 14, 15, 16.—20.

Secondly, more lively and heartily to praise God: yea, and he saved them from their enemies, themselves not striking a stroke; though their enemies the breed of the old serpent put them before in great feare.

verse 21, 22, 23, 24.

verse 3, 12

Behold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire.] The doubling of the words expresseth the superlative degree, by an usuall Hebraisme, *faire faire*, that is, very faire: which sheweth the estate of the Church in *Hezekiahs* time, who returned and set the Priests and Levites in their courses, restored their burnt sacrifices and obla-

Verse 15.

2 Chron. 29. & 30. & 31. ver. 1, 2.

oblations, ſanctified the Prieſts, called all the people to the Paſſeover, prayed for their healing, tooke away all the Images, Groves, and high Places.

Verſe 15. Plin. lib. 10. cap. 34.

Thou haſt doves eyes.] That is, chaſt and loathing uncleanneſſe, as *Pliny* reports the doves to be. *Hezekiah* loathed even the monuments of Idolatry, even the brazen Serpent, (though ſometimes Gods ordinance) when once the people went a whoring after it: ſo by this means, abuſes crept into the Church, in the dayes of

2 King. 18. 4.

Joram, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, are not recorded till they come to be cleanſed, leſt the joy of the marriage-ſong ſhould be darkened by the mention of ſo ſad occurrences; whence alſo it is, that the abuſes that crept in after the death of *Hezekiah*, in the dayes of *Manaſſeh* and *Ammon*, are not mentioned till their cleanſing came, recorded in the dayes of *Joſiah*.

Verſe 16.

Behold, thou art faire my beloved, yea pleaſant, alſo our bed is green.] This is the eſtate of the Church in the dayes of good *Joſiah*, who reformed it to the like eſtate of purity and beauty as in the dayes of *Hezekiah*, yea, in this he exceeded him, in taking away the high places which

Solomon

Solomon had built for his wives Idols, as also some other corruptions of *Ahaz*, ver. 12. and besides, he made all the people to worship the Lord onely, and to serve him *.

2 King. 23.13.

* 2 Chron. 34.32,33. 2 Chr. 34. 1.—7.

Yea pleasant.] It being more then faire, so young a man to work so great a worke of reformation.

Our bed is greene.] The house of God was the Temple, the bed in the house were the ordinances of God, wherein God was wont familiarly to embrace his spouse, and she him.

These in *Josiahs* time flourished in greatest purity, † so that there was no Passeover like unto his.

† 2 Chron. 35.18.

Our bed is green.] It is an allusion to the spring time, when the worship of God began to flourish againe, after a winter time of miry and dirty pollutions.

The beames of our house are cedar, and our rafters (or walls, or galleries) of firre.] These words set out the beauty of the Church, in regard of the repaires of the Temple made by *Josiah*.

Verse 17. 2 Chro. 34 8,14.

The use is to observe the severall beauties and ornaments of the Church, which are,

Use 1.

First,

First, to enjoy each ordinance of God in his ranke and place: it is as if the cheekes, or open face of the Church were decked with rowes of jewels. *Jeroboam* made Priests of the baſeſt of the people; and ſuch defect or corruption of Gods ordinances, is a blemiſh conſpicuous in the face of the Church.

Uſe 2. Secondly, good Kings ought to put upon their people wholeſome Lawes, and ſtrait binding to the purity of Religion and the worſhip of God: it is no impeachment to their Chriſtian liberty as Anabaptiſts dote, but an ornament to their beauty, making their necks comely as with chaines of gold. It was the commandement of *Aſa*, * *Whoſoever would not ſeek the Lord God of Iſrael, ſhould be put to death.* † *And* Joſiah *took away all the abominations out of all the Countries that pertained to the children of Iſrael, and made all that were preſent to ſerve, even to ſerve the Lord their God.*

* 2 Chro. 15.13.

† 2 Chro. 34.33.

Uſe 3. Thirdly, people to be ready to binde themſelves by ſolemn covenant and oath to keep ſuch Lawes, and to aſſiſt their Princes in cleanſing their uttermoſt borders and corners of the kingdome from Super-

Superstition and Idolatry; and it is no impeachment of Christian liberty to bow to Christian Lawes: yea, it is the beauty of a Christian Church to weare those chaines, those Lawes, which were made for the good of the Church, and it was their profaneneſſe and rebellion that ſay, * *Let us break their bands aſunder, and caſt away their cords from us.* * Pſa. 2. 3.

Use 4. Fourthly, Princes to ſend forth ſavoury and gracious Miniſters into all quarters of their dominions, that all their people may taſte and feele how ſweet the preaching of the Word is. This is the ornament of a Church, when Christian Princes ſo provide, that all places may be furniſhed with preaching Miniſters; this is to open a box of ſpikenard that the ſmell thereof may flow forth; but to leave them reliſhed with the dregs of Superſtition, this is a blemiſh.

Use 5. Verſe 13. Fifthly, to ſee that the Nobles and Magiſtrates countenance Prieſts and Levites, and by their authority to give the free paſſage to the Word, and to prevent diſturbances which elſe might be offered to Miniſters in their Churches, yea, all Magiſtrates to prevent corruptions in matters,

matters, whether of Religion or civill Juſtice, is as if a bundle of Myrrh ſhould lodge in the breaſts of the Church.

Uſe 6. Sixthly, the Lord Jeſus to refreſh and ſtrengthen the hearts and ſpirits of his people in publicke calamities, and to ſave them from the malignity and venome thereof, he is then as a cluſter of camphire to the Church in the vineyards of Engedi, as he was to *Iehoſaphat* and his people * when they knew not what to do. Chriſt is an ornament, and encourageth both Prieſt, Prophet, and Prince, to ſing a Pſalme of Thankeſgiving. And ſuppoſe enemies ſhould be as a cluſter in the border of the Church, how eaſie a thing is it for God to ſtrengthen, and be as a cluſter of camphire, to ſtrengthen and encourage them againſt theſe biting ſerpents.

* 2 Chro. 20. 12.

Verſe 22.

Uſe 7. Seventhly, not to foſter and tolerate inveterate corruptions, though received from worthy Anceſtors, but to hate all abuſes in Gods worſhip, even the very monuments of Idolatry, and to take them away, as *Hezekiah* did the brazen Serpent, and to ſet each ordinance of God in his place: the Church then is very fair, ſhe hath doves eyes.

2 King. 18. 4.

Eightly,

Eightly, young Princes to begin betimes to lift up their hearts to redreſſe abuſes in the Church, to imitate the beſt of their predeceſſors; yea, and to go beyond them, as *Joſiah* did, and to reſtore Gods worſhip to her native beauty and integrity. It is a faire, yea, a pleaſant thing to behold this forwardneſſe in any; much more in young Princes. Uſe 8.

Ninthly, to enjoy the worſhip of God, purged from all Superſtition, Idolatry, and from all devices of men; it is as if a bed were greene, freſh, flouriſhing and fruitfull: in ſuch worſhip Chriſt delights to reveale and communicate himſelfe familiarly with his people, and loveth not to come into a harlots bed, decked with the laces of tapeſtrie of Egypt. Uſe 9. Pro. 7.16.

Tenthly, ſuppoſe the Church againe and againe be laid waſt, ſo that in ſtead of camphire is Maſſe and Idolatry, it is an eaſie thing with God to ſend a *Joſiah*, to root out ſuch Superſtitions, that though abuſes crept into the Church for three or four Princes lives, yet God can cleanſe and reform her, as he did in *Joſiahs* time. God lookes not at the corruptions of his Church, thereby to loath her, but to heal Uſe 10.

her,

her, and thereby to glorifie his grace in her recovery, rather then his holineſſe in the diſcovery of her pollutions.

The bed is here mentioned in the ſpring of her flouriſhing, when it began to wax green, not in the winter ſeaſon of her dirty pollutions; and before, the chaſt eyes of the dove recorded, abhorring uncleanneſſe, not the eyes full of adultery, bringing ſpirituall pollutions into the Church: when there is any Superſtitious worſhip, there it is overſpread with winter, but when it is purged, then is the bed green; when Gods ordinances are kept pure, there Chriſt delighteth to be.

2 Pet. 2. 14.

Vſe 4. Eleventhly, it is an ornament of the Church to reſtore her with beames of cedar, and her walls or galleries with firre: cedar is famous for durableneſſe, enduring even to eternity, ſaith *Pliny*: firre is acceptable for his ſweetneſſe, and while he groweth, for his heighth, ſtreightneſſe and perpetuall greenneſſe: *Solomon* houſe or Temple was of old a lively type, partly,

Plin. lib. 13. cap. 5. 16, 41.

Firſt, of the humane body of Chriſt, the Temple of the Deity.

Joh. 2. 19. 21. Col. 2. 9.

Secondly, of the myſticall body of Chriſt,

Christ, his Church or congregation, 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. Christs humane body never decayeth, and therefore needeth no repairing: his mysticall body the Church, if it fall into decay through corruption of Doctrine or Worship, it may be most fitly repaired,

1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 19.

First, by laying in the walls of the Church such solid and eternall truths of God, as may hold up the walls of the building.

Thus *Luther* restored the Church by laying this beame of cedar, the Doctrine of free Justification by Christ.

Luther.

Secondly, by setting up such worship and workes for the people to walke in, as are truly sweet and amiable in Gods sight, springing from fresh and green sincerity, growing up to the heavens; these are like galleries of firre, whereas vowes of perfection, and works of supererogation, and all other reliques and rags of Popery, are no better then rotten and moth-eaten wood, fit fuell for the fire.

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 2.

I *Am the roſe of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.*

2 *As the lilly among thornes, ſo is my love among the daughters.*

3 *As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, ſo is my beloved among the ſonnes; I ſate downe under his ſhadow with great delight, and his fruit was ſweet to my taſte.*

4 *He brought me to the banqueting houſe, and his banner over me was love.*

5 *Stay me with flaggons, comfort me with apples, for I am ſicke of love.*

6 *His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.*

7 *I charge you, O yee daughters of Jeruſalem, by the*

the Roes, and by the Hinds of the field, that ye ſtirre not up, nor awake my love till he pleaſe.

8 The voyce of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, skipping upon the hills.

9 My beloved is like a Roe, or young Hart: behold, he ſtandeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the window, ſhewing himſelfe through the lattice.

10 My beloved ſpake, and ſaid unto me, Riſe up my love, my faire one, and come away.

11 For loe, the winter is paſt, the raine is over and gone.

12. The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.

13 The figtree putteth forth her greene figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good ſmell. Ariſe my love, my faire one, and come away.

14 O my dove! thou art in the clefts of the rocke, in the ſecret place of the ſtaires, let me ſee thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce, for ſweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance is comely.

15. Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that ſpoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.

16 My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lillies.

17 Untill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flee away: turn my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bether.

The Explanation.

Cant. 2. verse 1. *I am the rose of Sharon, and the lilly of the vallies.*

THe estate of the Church from *Josiahs* repaire of the Temple, (in the last verse of the last chapter) is described here,

First, before the captivity, verse 1, 2. under the last dayes of *Josiah*, *Jehoahaz*, *Jehojakim*, *Jehojachin*, and *Zedechiah*.

2 Kin. 23. 30, 34. and 24. 6, 17.

Secondly, in the captivity,

1. At home, the remnant, ver. 3.

2. Abroad, in Babylon, ver. 4.—7.

Thirdly, in the end, after the captivity, where is described,

1. Her calling out of captivity, to returne and worship in Jerusalem, verse 8.—13.

Secondly, her estate at Jerusalem till the dayes of the Maccabees, verse 14. —17.

I am the rose.] The rose is,

First, lovely for beauty,

Secondly, sweet for smell; comforting both heart and braine.

Thirdly, wholesome for use and medicinable.

Of

Of Sharon.] Sharon was a fruitfull field lying under Bashan, where the heards were wont to feed, excellent for fatnesse and fruitfulnesse. 1 Chro. 5. 16, 17. & 27. 29. Isa. 33. 9. & 35. 2.

And the lilly.] The lilly is, first, fragrant. Secondly, faire, yet of the vallies, where the heards use to feed, as in Sharon. Matth. 6. 28, 29. 1 Chro. 27 29.

These words then set forth the Churches complaint of that time, as some Interpreters of chiefe worth have conceived it; though the words may as fitly be uttered by Christ himselfe, to set forth both his owne disposition and the Churches estate.

The first, hee was then the rose of the field, the lilly of the vallies, to shew, that when the Church despised him, to converse with her in the Temple, and the Worship there celebrated: * Hee was now ready to leave his Temple, and to be a Sanctuary to his Church abroad. * Chap. 1. ver. 16, 17. Ezek. 9. 3. & 10. 4, 9. & 11. 23. 16.

Secondly, Christ is here described according to the estate of the Church of that time, which wanted culture, ordering and dressing, thornes and bryars growing up in the Church, and not wee-

ded out: * The wicked are as thornes and bryars, † and ſtore of them growing up in the Church.

When the Church is as a garden incloſed [a], then bryars and thorns are weeded out; but neither Magiſtrate nor Miniſter did his duty in removing offences in thoſe dayes: [b] ſo lillies of the field are taken for lillies neglected, which neither take care for themſelves, nor others take care for them.

Thirdly, as the roſe of the field, or lillies of the vallies, or lilly amongſt the thornes, is continually,

Firſt, ſubject to be prickt and rent with thornes.

Secondly, trodden under-foot by the heards of beaſts, ſo the Church was then ſubject,

1. To be vexed with the wicked growing up with her.

2. To be trodden under-foot by the beaſts of the field, the Babylonians, the Egyptians.

[c] *Joſiah*, how ſweet a Roe! how faire a Lilly! yet how untimely trodden down by *Necho*? The other Kings were placed, diſplaced, impriſoned, and the whole kingdome

* 2 Sam. 23. 6.
† Mic. 7. 4.
a Cant. 4. 12.
b Mat. 6. 28, 29.
Verſe 2, 3.
c 2 Chro. 35. 22, 23, 24.
2 Chro. 36. 17.

kingdome with them, at the pleasure of the Babylonians and Egyptians: and in the end, the whole Church laid waste by the Babylonians.

Againe, Christ is the rose and lilly, as being,

First, sweet with the savour of his graces.

Secondly, beautifull.

Thirdly, medicinable.

When the Church is corrupt in it selfe, it is yet faire and sweet in Christ; [d] In him our life is hid in our worst taking: he being white as a lilly by the purity of his righteousnesse, we likewise are white as lillies in him cloathed with his righteousnesse. d Col 3.3

As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sonnes, I sate mee downe under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. Verse 3.

A tree first, not tall as the Cedar of Lebanon, not strong as the Okes of Bashan, but a tree of middle stature, implying an inferiour Magistrate, not so high and mighty as the Monarchs of the world, yet such whose shadow yeelds,

First, refreshing to a man wandering

and fainting in a wilde forreſt.

Secondly, whoſe fruit is ſweet and comfortable, ſuch was Chriſt to his Church, diſpenſing himſelfe in *Gedaliah*, whom * *Nebuchadnezzar* made governour over the remnant of the people that were left in the land.

* 2 King. 25.22.

Firſt, under him, as under a ſhadow, they were feareleſſe and ſafe c: but after he was cut down, they were driven from under his ſhadow, and durſt ſtay no longer in their own countrey, which was left as a wilde forreſt f.

c 2 Kin. 25. 23.—25.

f Verſe 26

Secondly, they gathered,

Firſt, much ſweet ſummer fruit *.

* Jer. 40. 10.—12.

Secondly, much good inſtruction and direction from *Ieremiah* and *Baruch* g, who both lived with him.

g Jer. 40. 6 & 43. 6.

Verſe 4.

Wine-cellar.] *Heb.* Houſe of wine; not ſo fitly termed banquetting houſe, which *Solomon* expreſſeth by another name †. A wine-cellar is a low vault, under the ground, darke, cold, raw and gloomy; yet repleniſhed with veſſels of liquor, which refreſheth and inlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth.

† Eccleſ. 7.2.

This houſe, to the Church, was Babylon, whither God brought his people into

into captivity, which at first view seemed dolefull and heavy, but afterward yeelded to them many sweet tastes, yea deep draughts of Gods favour: Gods Spirit coming upon men, makes them seeme as full of new wine [h]. It refresheth and enlargeth the heart, and openeth the mouth,

h Acts 2. 13.

First, to the praise of God.

Secondly, to the edification of his Church. Such a spirit God powred upon *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Shadrach* and his fellowes [i] in the captivity.

i Dan. 1. 19,20.

And his banner over me was love.]

Banner;

First, for an ensigne of defence to the Church.

Secondly, for a flagge of defiance to their enemies: How lovingly and gloriously (as with a banner of love displayed) did God defend the three children and *Daniel* himself [k]?

Dan. 3.25. k Dan. 6. 22.

How did God offer defiance to Idolatry in the three children [l]?

l Dan. 5. 16. — 18. & 6.10. Verse 5.

Stay mee with flaggons and comfort mee with apples, for I am sicke of love.] I, the Church is here faint and sicke, and ready to swoone, for desire of further fellowship

ship with Christ, and for her owne help desireth,

First, Flaggons of wine to stay her.

Secondly, Apples to comfort her; as indeed apples doe comfort the heart and stomach, prevents swooning, and restraines poyson*: Thus *Daniel*, through abundance of Revelations was faint and sicke, and desirous of more cleere knowledge of his visions, and of the Churches deliverance, and found the † Angel ready to refresh and strengthen him: And the other members of the Church feeling such sweet taste of Christs presence amongst them in the captivity, were (doubtlesse) earnestly desirous of more full enjoying him perfectly,

*Fernelius a Physician.

† Dan. 8. 27. & 10, 12. ver. 15. 19.

First, by the ministery of the Prophets, as by flaggons of wine.

Secondly, by the magistracy of *Daniel* and his fellowes, whom the King set up for inferiour Magistrates, as by apples, the fruit of the apple trees.

Dan. 2. 48, 49.

Verse 6. *His left hand is under my head, his right hand doth embrace me.*

The words may be either a narration how it is, or a prayer that it may be; so in the originall, the blessings of Gods left

left hand are riches and glory, * and of his right hand, length of dayes, or immortality. Riches and honours God conveyeth to us by the hand of the Magistrate, immortality by the hand of Ministers. * Pro 3.16

The Church therefore desireth God in her captivity, (which thing also God granted) that,

First, Princes should be the lifters up of her head, her nursing fathers and mothers.

Secondly, Prophets and Priests might deliver to her the sweet testimonies of Christs embracing love; this was done † by *Evil-merodach* to *Jehojachin*, and by the ministery of *Daniel* and *Ezekiel*. † 2 King. 25.27, 30. Dan. 2.48, 49.

The Princes allowed them great liberty, * the Prophets dispensed heavenly and comfortable doctrine. * Jer. 29. 5, 6.

I charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please.] *Heb.* I adjure you, that is, I cause you to sweare by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, not by them as the persons thou art to sweare by, but by those for whose sake, and by whose meanes they are to take themselves bound as by a solemne oath (not to stirre Verse 7.

up

up or awake my love) that is, not to provoke Chriſt to exerciſe his Church by any change of their eſtate, till it ſhall pleaſe himſelfe.

Theſe Roes and Hindes are wilde, and fearfull creatures, eaſily and ſwiftly running away, yet otherwiſe willing to feed with the ſheep: ſuch were then the Gentiles, willing to converſe with the Jewes, and to come towards Religion: yet if the eſtate of the Church ſhould have proved more troubleſome by any indiſcreet or offenſive carriage of the Jewes, they would ſoone have ſtarted backe from fellowſhip with them; for their ſakes therefore the Church chargeth her daughters, as by an oath, not to diſturb the peace of Babel, not to ſeeke prepoſterouſly deliverance from thence, before the time that Chriſt had appointed, leſt it turned to the diſturbance of her peace; and to the * carrying away ſuch Gentiles as were coming on to be Proſelytes.

* Jer. 29. 4.—9.

Uſe 1. This may firſt let us ſee, that notwithſtanding the reformation of Religion, Chriſt may be pleaſed rather to live abroad in the fields, then at home, where the

the people would willingly assemble. The house of God was now repaired, and the bed greene *: and the Church invites Christ to come in unto her, in it, yet hee disposeth himselfe so, as more willing to call her abroad. So wee may see, that notwithstanding the purity and simplicity of Christs worship, yet Christ is not bound to any place; if things were never so reformed, yet he might leave us, and goe into the wilde field. Rome hath long doted on *Peters* Chaire, and Jerusalem might as well have bragged of her Priviledges as any other place, but Christ leaves them: never rest wee then in any outward estate, for Christ may leave us. The Palatinate hath been as reformed as any Church for Doctrine, and though they might say, their bed was greene, and their beames were of cedar, and their rafters of firre, yet God hath left them: for doe we thinke that if God had beene there, these things had befallen them that now are?

* Cant. 1. 16, 17.

Secondly, this lets us see, that though Magistrates and Ministers should both neglect their duties in ordering and dressing the Church, so that the wicked were tolera-

Use 2.

tolerated to grow up with them; yet God keepes the ſpirits of his children ſweet and pure, as roſes and lillies in the midſt of bryars and thornes: be not deceived then, for there may be roſes and lillies growing, where is nothing but bryars and thornes to ſcratch them: It is not ſtraight no Church, when it is there; for Chriſt can ſee his Church though ſhe be there.

Uſe 3. Thirdly, we may here obſerve againſt the Separatiſt, that it is not ſtraight no Church, that is commingled (as they ſpeake) with notorious wicked ones: the Church may be Chriſts love, yea, and a fragrant and pure flower in his ſight and noſtrils, and yet live amongſt bryars and thornes.

Uſe 4. Fourthly, obſerve, the ſtate of the Church is ſometimes expoſed to opportunity of treading under-foot, no wall nor hedge to fence them: It may lie open,

Firſt, to ſcratching and rending of thornes.

Secondly, to treading under-foot of the wild beaſts *.

* Pſal. 80. 12, 13.

Uſe 5. Fifthly, this ſerves to direct inferiour Magi-

Magistrates, how to carry themselves towards the Church, to be as Apple-trees in a wood, wherein the Church travailing may finde,

First, shadow of protection.

Secondly, sweete fruit of loving mercy.

Sixthly, we may here see the wonderfull power of God, and goodnesse to his Church, in turning their house of bondage into a house of wine, in spreading also his banner of love over them in their greatest distresses and dangers: What more dolefull times of his Church then captivity? when men would thinke God carries his Church into a dungeon, then he carries her into a Wine-cellar. This may be a ground of solid comfort to us in our worst takings, for though wee be in the greatest extremity, yea, in the deepest dungeon of darknesse, God can sustaine and uphold us here, and refresh us with many comforts. *Use 6.*

Seventhly, this ought to stirre us up to more ardent and longing affections after Christ, so that as wee be ready to faint and swoone through earnest affections, after more full and familiar fol- *Use 7.*

lowship

lowship with him : It was *Daniels* case, hee was sicke of love, so let it be with us for want of Gods presence; and pray that God would refresh us with his presence, and send good Ministers and good Magistrates to be as nursing fathers to his Church.

Esay 49. 23.

Use 8.

Eighthly, this serves to teach, and straightly to charge the children of God, when they enjoy Gods presence and favour in the Ministery and Magistracy, sustaining and comforting them, to take heed of disturbing their peace,

1. By any indiscreet : or
2. Offensive carriage : for it is,

First, a disturbance to Christ himselfe, he is stirred up and awaked, (as it were) before he please.

Secondly, the Roes and Hindes of the field, young comers on in Religion, are soone scared away by dangers and troubles arising against the Church; therefore we should be carefull and take heed wee provoke not any dog to barke, for then they will be gone. Let us therefore walke wisely, and inoffensively, that none bee discouraged, that Christ, who doth sustaine us, and refresh us,

may

may dwell with us for ever.

The voyce of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountaines, and skipping upon the hills.] Ver. 8. to the end.

In these words are described,

First, the Churches deliverance out of captivity: where is laid downe,

First, the preparation to the deliverance in the causes of it; which were,

First, the voyce of the beloved.

Secondly, the coming of the beloved, and that swiftly,

First, leaping and skipping.

Secondly, as a young Hart or Roe *. * Ver. 8, 9.

Thirdly, his besieging Babel and overcoming it, set forth in three actions:

First, standing behinde the wall.

Secondly, looking out at the windows.

Thirdly, shewing himself through the latttice †. † Ver. 8. 9.

Secondly, the calling out of captivity: Ver. 10,—13.

First, to goe out of Babylon into their owne countrey; whereunto there are motives,

First, from removall of impediments, verse 11.

Secondly, from store of opportunities, verse 12, 13.

Thirdly, to worship God in poblicke
h Ver. 14. meetings in their owne countrey h.

Secondly, the state of the Church returned into their owne countrey, in regard,

i Ver. 15. First, of opposition of enemies i, subtill and ravenous: where is set forth,

First, their nature; they are foxes, little foxes.

Secondly, the harme they doe, they spoile the vines.

Thirdly, there take us the foxes.

Secondly, of their communion with Christs outward enemies, and inward abuses restrained, partly, more plentifull and intire.

First, *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*

k Ver. 16. Secondly, k *Feedeth among the Lillies.*

Secondly, interrupted, and yet by turnes Christ often and speedily visiting and succouring them, and that to the time of the coming of Christ, and the abolishing of the shadowes of the ceremoniall Law l.

l Ver. 17. Verse 8. *The voyce of my beloved.*] This was the report of *Cyrus* coming to besiege Babel,

Babel, and his muſtering together of many Nations to that ſervice; which rumour was diſcerned by the faithfull, to be the accompliſhment of the Prophecies given them before, of deliverance by *Cyrus* *. And therefore the Church hearing this rumour, ſuddenly acknowledgeth in it the promiſe and voyce of Chriſt †: and ſo it was no leſſe gratefull to them, then dolefull and dreadfull to the Babylonians.

* Iſa. 44. 28. & 45. 1

† Jer. 50. 42, 43, 46.

He cometh leaping upon the mountaines.

My beloved is like a Roe, or a young Hart, behold, he ſtandeth behinde our wall, he looketh forth at the window, ſhewing himſelfe through the lattice.] Verſe 9.

Theſe words expreſſe the great expedition and ſpeed which *Cyrus* made in his journey againſt Babel, all the Nations lying in the way,

Firſt, either of themſelves ſetting open their gates to him, as weary of the Babylonian yoke.

Secondly, or ſpeedily ſurpriſed and ſubdued.

Hee ſtandeth behinde the wall.] Laying ſiege to the walls of Babylon.

Hee looketh forth at the windowes.] That

is, he giveth some glimps of hope, of further enlargement to the Church.

He sheweth himselfe through the lattice.] As in the originall, any place burned through in the siege of Babel, *Cyrus* diverting the course of Euphrates another way, which before came through the midst of the city, burning up the reeds, and drying up the water passages, hee shewed himselfe through the place, and entred the city *.

* Jer. 30. 31, 32.

Verse 10. *My beloved spake and said unto me, Rise up my love, my faire one, and come away.*] That is, *Cyrus* made open proclamation for my departure out of Babel, and returne into mine owne countrey †. Though *Cyrus* was an heathen, and knew not Christ the beloved, [a] yet the Church in *Cyrus* saw the hand and voyce of Christ, using *Cyrus* as an instrument for deliverance; whence *Ezra* saith, [b] *The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.*

† Ezra 2. 1.—4.

a Isa. 45. 4, 5.

b Ezr. 1. 7.

Verse 11. *For loe, the winter is past, the raine is over and gone.*]

That is, first, partly it was now spring time of the yeare, the winter and raine were now over, which else might have hindered travell.

Secondly,

Secondly, the metaphoricall winter of Babels captivity, and all the ſtormes of it were blowne over; whence it is, the Chaldean word is here uſed to ſignifie this winter, not the common Hebrew word.

The flowers appeare on the earth, the time of the ſinging of birds is come, and the voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.] Verſe 12.

Which, with the words following, is,

Firſt, partly a deſcription of the ſpring time, which invited them to this journey.

Secondly, partly a ſetting before them of ſuch conveniences, which, like to the ſpring time, might invite them to this journey.

The flowers appeare on the earth.] That is, even they of the people of the countries amongſt whom they ſojourned; they both,

Firſt, praiſed God for their deliverance *.

Secondly, furniſhed them with gold and ſilver, and other uſefull things for their journey †.

* Pſa. 116. 1.—3.

† Ezr. 1. 4. 6.—8.

The time of the ſinging of birds is come.] To wit, that the Prieſts and Levites

should now sing and praise God in their owne countries; which they thought unseasonable to doe in a strange land †.

† Psa. 137. 3, 4.

The voyce of the turtle is heard in our land.] That is, of Christ the faithfull spouse of his Church, who is mourning in Judea, because he findeth not his Mate (the Church) there.

Verse 13. *The figtree putteth forth her greene figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell.*] That is, the chiefe of the Fathers and Elders of the people, they shew themselves forward to countenance the journey, and to prepare for it.

Arise my love, my faire one, and come away.] Being twice repeated *, it argueth the people were slacke to leave their states, which they had planted themselves in at Babel; and therefore stood in need of calling on againe and againe.

* Ver. 10, 13.

Verse 14. *O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret place of the staires, let me see thy countenance, let mee heare thy voyce, for sweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.*

O my dove.] That is, my chaſte, innocent and faire ſpouſe.

That art in the clefts of the rocke, in the ſecret place of the ſtaires.] That now doſt worſhip me in holes and corners.

Let mee ſee thy countenance, let me heare thy voyce.] Let mee ſee thee aſſembled into the face of a Church, in my Sanctuary, let mee there heare thee calling upon mee, ſinging praiſe to mee, ſpeaking my word.

For ſweet is thy voyce, and thy countenance comely.]

Firſt, the voyce of the Church, at one and the ſame time.

Firſt, rejoycing in Gods wonderfull mercy.

Secondly, weeping and bewailing, partly,

Firſt, their owne unworthineſſe.

Secondly, the decayes of the Church, in regard of former times [a].

Take us the foxes, the little foxes that ſpoile the vines, for our vines have tender grapes.] That is, reſtraine (the foxes, the little foxes) the enemies of the Church, of greater or leſſer power; [b] ſuch as were the Samaritans. Theſe ſpoiled the

a Pſa. 14. 6 1,—3. with Jer. 50. 4,5. & Ezra 3. 11.—13. Verſe 15.

b Ezra 4. 2.—4. & 5. 3. Neh. 4. 1.—3. Heſt. 3. 8, 9

vines, [c] hindered the proceeding of the building of the Temple, and the peace of the Church. And therefore *Tobiah* said truely of himselfe and his fellowes, that they, as foxes, going upon the weake foundation of the walls of Jerusalem, might easily demolish the same [d]: Yet these foxes in the end were taken and restrained, First, partly by the Edict of *Darius* [e]: Secondly, partly by the hanging of *Haman* and his sonnes, and the destruction of some other of the Jewes enemies [f].

c Ezr. 4. 4. 5, 23, 24.

d Neh. 4. 3

e Ezra 6. 11, 13.

f Heb. 7. 10. & 9. 14, 16.

My beloved is mine and I am his.] The Church enjoyeth familiar and comfortable communion with Christ, these enemies being quelled *.

Verse 16.

* Neh. 8.

Shee feedeth among the lillies.] That is, among pure and faire Christians, all corruptions being weeded out, both of strange wives [g], of usury, of right of the Levites maintenance and ministration, † and prophanation of the Sabbath.

g Ezr. 10.

† Neh. 13.

Verse 17.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away: turne my beloved, and be thou like a Roe or a young Hart, upon the mountaines of Bether.

Turne

Turne my beloved.] That is, returne often to visit and succour me.

As a Roe, or a young Hart upon the mountaines of Bether.] That is, swiftly and speedily, * Bether being neere to them on the other side Jordan; as who should say, Though thou sometime turne from us, yet be not farre, but ready ever and anon to returne and succour us.

* 2 Sam. 2 29.

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away.] That is, till Christ come, and the Ceremoniall shadows vanish.

First, this teacheth us that in all the instruments of the Churches deliverance, we should see and discerne Christ speaking and working in them: See here the Church lookes not at *Cyrus* so much, but at Christ in him. Doe they heare a rumour of a deliverance? It is the voyce of Christ, and it must needs be a strong voyce which Christ is the author of. The wisest *Daniel*, *Shadrach*, *Meshach* and *Abednego*, they say it is Christ, and all the rest yeeld; and the Church sees Christ come skipping: Doth it see *Cyrus* about the wals? She sees Christ there. Doth she see *Cyrus* shewing himselfe through the lattice? She sees Christ there. Doth she see

Use 1.

see when he is possessed there, and makes proclamation to them to goe up againe to Jerusalem? She lookes at it as Christs voyce, saying, *Arise my love, my fair one, and come away.*

Verse 13.

So the holy Ghost teacheth, what favour any doth shew to the Church, it is Christ that doth it; so take it, that if any good befall the Church, it is Christ that doth it: If any lead into captivity, *Nebuchadnezzar*, or any other, it is Christ that leads her into a Wine-cellar: If there be any noise or worke of deliverance, it is Christ that comes leaping and skipping: So in all the calamities, and in all the blessings that befall the Church, ascribe all to Christ. * The same hand that gave, the same hand hath taken away: † God turned the captivity of *Job*, and God turned againe the captivity of his people. This is a wonderfull stay to Gods Church, and to every member of it; for man cannot bring it into captivity, and bring it out againe. Mans hand cannot bring hard things upon the Church, nor bring her out againe of them; for if it were in mens hands, or in Satans, or in our owne hands, it would not goe well with

*Job 1.21 & 42.10.
† Psal. 126. 1, 11.

with us; but being in Christs hands alone, it may be a stay and a comfort.

Secondly, this teacheth us, that when the time of the Churches deliverance is come, Christ will come quickly and speedily for her deliverance, leaping and skipping as a Roe or a Hart. The winter shall not alwayes remain on the Church, no, not when she deserves a black winter. *The patient abiding of the Saints shall not alwayes be forgotten.* Suppose God leads his Church into captivity seven yeares, yea seventy years; yet it will not alwaies continue. This may serve to comfort us in the distresses of the Church, at home or abroad; God will not alwayes punish with reproach or desolation, but the time will come these will be gone and flee away. use 2. Psal. 9.18.

Thirdly, this lets us see the Church profiteth by calamities; shee comes out better from them, then shee went into them: she entred and went into captivity hating God, defiled with many abominations; she returnes out, *My love, my faire one.* The Church of God, and the members of it are more lovely in Gods sight by the hard times that passe over them. use 3.

them: when this Church had beene ſeventy yeares in captivity, (a hard time it was, yet) they loſt nothing by it; they
Jer. 12. 7, 8 kiſſed his rod, and ſought God; and now hee ſtiles them lovely. He loathed them becauſe they loathed him; they were now tried and purified; before they were loathſome, but now are lovely; before hated, but now loved. But ſee what a bleſſed uſe chaſtiſements are of to the Church: how loathſome ſoever wee goe into captivity, when wee defile our ſelves with luſts and ſins, yet when wee have beene throughly humbled with ſome croſſes, how faire come we out!
* Pro. 3. 11. * *My ſonne deſpiſe not the chaſtening of the Lord, neither be weary of his correction.* And why doth God ſay, *Deut.* 8. 16. *He proved them to doe them good*; when hee ſaith, my love, it is more then lovely, it is love, it is love it ſelfe; and faire one is
† Pſa. 119. 71. more then faire? So, † *It is good for me* (ſaith *David*) *that I have been afflicted*: ſo the Church before her affliction was loathſome, foule, hated; but now ſhe is faire and lovely.

Thou art faire, Oh my love.]

Uſe 4. Fourthly, this lets us ſee, the Churches

ches winter: ſtorms ſhall not alwayes lie upon her, but they ſhall in the end blow over; * *The rod of the wicked ſhall not reſt upon the lot of the righteous.* * Pſ. 125. 3.

Fifthly, we may ſee that outward comforts are eaſily able to drowne in us a longing after Gods ordinances: the contentment that ſome found in captivity, made them ſtand in need of often calling to returne to Sion. Uſe 5.

Sixthly, wee may learne here, that the face of the Church is not alwayes viſible and conſpicuous in the eyes of men, but alwayes in the eyes of God: for they meet under the ſtaires, and worſhip God in holes and corners. And a while after Chriſt ſaith, Why doſt thou lie thus under the ſtaires, and in clifts of rocks? let me ſee thy face, and heare thy voyce. The Church of Rome advanceth her ſelfe, that ſhe hath alwayes been conſpicuous; but this is no true ſigne of a true Church, for the true Church is not alwayes conſpicuous: though Chriſt alwayes ſees ſome to meet in corners and holes, yet not alwayes in ſolemne aſſemblies. The Dove of Chriſt Jeſus ſometimes makes her reſt in the rockes, and builds Uſe 6.

builds under the ſtairs, where Chriſt ſees her, but not publikely.

uſe 7. Seventhly, ſee here the Church needs not Angels and Saints to mediate for her, her owne voyce is ſweet, and countenance comely in Gods eſtimation: * *At that day yee ſhall aske in my name; and I ſay not to you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himſelfe loveth you becauſe yee have loved mee.* Chriſt tells us, he ſhall have no great need to pray for us, for God himſelfe loveth us, to heare our voyce, and to ſee us; let us then not be afraid to put forth our voyces: labour then for ſuch a ſpirit as to grieve for our ſinnes, and to rejoyce in Gods mercies; for God is pleaſed with that: hee is a true citizen of Sion, that when hee abounds in Gods mercies, yet hee weepes for his ſins; and when hee weeps for his ſinnes, yet hee is thankefull for Gods mercies.

Verſe 14.

* Joh. 16. 26, 27.

uſe 8. Againe, obſerve, the Church ſhall alwayes be troubled with ſome enemies, *Take us the foxes that ſpoile the vines:* There ſhall be ever ſome *Sanballat*, or *Tobiah*, or ſome other to be nibbling at the Church of God: wonder not at this, for

Verſe 16.

for this will be so; but observe touching these enemies of the Church,

Firſt, they ſhall deale ſubtilly and craftily with her.

Secondly, they may diſturb and hinder her peace and proceedings; but,

Thirdly, they ſhall in the end be reſtrained; as in *Revel.* 19.20. *And the Beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe Prophet that wrought miracles before him, &c. Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone.* Therefore let ſuch foxes know the time will come when Chriſt will either take them, and chaine them, and binde them up, as he did *Sanballat*, *Tobiah*, *Shether-boznai* *: or elſe hang them up, as hee did *Haman* and his ſonnes. Let men then take heed that they doe not puſh at the Church, for God will either chaine them up, or hang them out of the way.

* Ezra 6. 6,7.

Laſtly, here wee may ſee, when the enemies of the Church are reſtrained or deſtroyed, and corruptions weeded out of it, the Church then enjoyeth ſweet, and ſafe, and full fellowſhip with the Lord Jeſus, and hee with her. Hee gives her pledges of his favour, and ſhee gives him

uſe 9.

him pledges of pure worshipping him: he feeds them with his ordinances, they him with their sacrifices. And they that would procure Christ this, let them provide for weeding out of their sinnes; as, usury, wicked marriages, profanations of Gods Sabbaths, &c. Such Churches shall be sweet, and much sweet solace shall they enjoy one with another, Christ with them, and they with him.

THE

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 3.

BY night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoule loveth; I ſought him, but I found him not.

2 I will riſe now, and goe about the city in the ſtreets, and in the broad wayes, I will ſeeke him whom my ſoule loveth: I ſought him, but I found him not.

3 The watch-men that goe about the city found mee, to whom I ſaid, Saw ye him whom my ſoule loveth?

4 It was but a little that I paſſed from them but I found him whom my ſoule loveth: I held him, and would not let him goe, untill I had brought him into my mothers houſe, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

5 *I charge you, O ye daughters of Jeruſalem, by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the field, that ye ſtir not up, nor awake my love till he pleaſe.*

6 *Who is this that cometh out of the wilderneſſe like pillars of ſmoake, perfumed with myrrh, and frankincenſe, with all the powders of the merchant?*

7 *Behold his bed, which is Solomons: threeſcore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Iſrael.*

8 *They all hold ſwords, being expert in warre: Every man hath his ſword upon his thigh, becauſe of feare in the night.*

9 *King Solomon made himſelfe a charet of the wood of Lebanon.*

10 *Hee made the pillars thereof of ſilver, the bottome thereof of gold, the covering of it of purple, the middeſt thereof being paved with love, for the daughters of Jeruſalem.*

11 *Goe forth, O ye daughters of Sion, and behold King Solomon with the crowne wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his eſpouſals: and in the day of the gladneſſe of his heart.*

THE

The Explanation.

Cant. 3. verſe 1. *By night on my bed I ſought him whom my ſoule loveth, I ſought him, but I found him not, &c.*

THis Chapter ſetteth forth the eſtate of the Church from after the dayes of *Nehemiah*, to the time of Chriſts ſojourning here on earth, in a two-fold period:

Firſt, under the *Maccabees*, ver. 1.—6.

Secondly, in *John Baptiſt's* time, verſe 6.—11.

The ſtate of the Church in the *Maccabees* time was, partly, full of calamities, as a time of darkneſſe, *By night I ſought him*, and partly ſweetned with ſome more comfortable iſſue. Verſe 1.

This calamity is ſet forth,

Firſt, by reſemblance to night, *By night I ſought him.*

Secondly, by the abſence of Chriſt, whom ſhe ſought in vaine. Verſe 2.

Firſt, *In her bed*, verſe 1.

Secondly, *In the ſtreets of the city*, verſe 2.

Thirdly, *Amongſt the watchmen*, ver. 3.

The comfortable issue of her seeking Christ is set forth,

First, *By her finding of him*, verse 4.

Secondly, *By her holding of him*, verse 4.

Thirdly, *By her bringing of him into her mothers house*, verse 4.

Fourthly, *By her charge to the daughters of Jerusalem*, to walke circumspectly, that this estate be not interrupted, ver. 5.

Verse 1. *By night.*] That is, in time of darkenesse, and publicke calamity; when *Antiochus Epiphanes*, the little horne waxed exceeding great, wasted the pleasant land, cast some of the host and starres of heaven to the ground; when hee tooke away the daily sacrifice, and trode downe the Sanctuary, and cast downe the truth to the ground; when hee robbed the Temple, murthered the people, spoiled the City, made lawes for profaning the Sabbath, for offering Swines flesh, for neglecting Circumcision, when he set up the Statues of *Jupiter Olympius*, the abomination of desolation in the holy place, when hee burnt the Bookes of the Law, and made it death to have a Testament; when he brake downe the Altar and set up another, when hee put women to death

Dan. 8. 9.—12.

death who had cauſed children to be circumciſed, and hanged children upon the neckes of their mothers, 1 *Mac.* 1. 23. to the end.

In my bed.] Not in my bed of eaſe and ſloth, (as ſome take it) for what eaſe could the Church take in the night time of calamity? But in my bed, that is, in the place and duties of Gods worſhip, the temple and the ordinances. Cha. 1. 16. & 3. 7.

I ſought him whom my ſoule loveth.] I deſired and endeavoured to have fellowſhip with Chriſt, *but I found him not*, the Sanctuary being polluted, and the daily ſacrifice taken away, and profane Idols ſet up in the place.

In the ſtreets of the city.] That is, in the open Aſſemblies of the faithfull, in the Synagogues, in the cities of Judea and Jeruſalem; but behold there Altars erected to Idols, and incenſe burned, and the books of the Law caſt into the fire *: Yea, behold, the citizens of Jeruſalem all fled and gone †: and the reſt went in proceſſion to *Bacchus* *. Verſe 2. * 1 Mac. 1. 57. — 59. † 1 Mac. 1. 40. * 2 Mac. 6. 7.

The watch-men that goe about the city.] To wit, the Levites, who anſwered her with ſilence; but a little after ſhee found Verſe 3.

ſuccour at Modin, for the Prieſts, *Mattathias* and his ſonnes, *Judas*, *Jonathan*, and *Simon*, and the reſt that went about to repaire the ruines of the Church and Common-wealth; to theſe the faithfull Church repairing, * and finding deliverance and comfort, by *Judas* eſpecially, or rather by Chriſt in him †, ſhee left him not till ſhee had brought him into the Temple, where ſhe ſoone after cleanſed the Sanctuary, and reſtored the purity of Gods worſhip, and offered ſacrifice according to the Law, ſo that ſhee found great comfort and joy in the duties of Gods worſhip m. Thus againe found they Chriſt in a typicall Saviour, held him by faith, and, with courage and zeale, brought him into the temple and Sanctuary, the houſe and chamber of her mother: that is, of the former Church of Iſrael, or of the Catholique Church, for the Church of the former ages is the mother of the latter; or the whole Church is the mother of each part in uſuall phraſe of Hebrew ſpeech: The Temple is the houſe of both, the Sanctuary is the chamber of her that bare her.

* 1 Mac. 2.42, 43.

† 1 Mac. 3.5.—8.

m 1 Mac. 4.42,46.

I

I charge you, O yee daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes and by the Hindes of the field, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love till he please. Verse 5.

I charge you, &c.] See the same words opened, *Chap.* 2. 7. The Church chargeth all her daughters, all her members, to take heed, lest by their undiscreet dealing, or any wicked practise, they stirre up the neighbour Princes of Syria and Egypt; not to disturb the peace of the Church, and to provoke Christ againe to leave them desolate; which though *Jason* and *Menelaus* and *Alcimus* broke †, yet they prevailed not so far, but Christ was still found in the temple of the faithfull till his coming in the flesh. † 2 Mac. 14:14.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant? Verse 6.

Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness.] This is a description of *John Baptist*, and of the Church gathered by his Ministery in the wilderness: which is set forth,

First, by the admiration and inquisitiveness of the old Synagogue after him

and his baptisme: Who is this that commeth, or ariseth, &c. which was fulfilled [l]: to whom the Jewes sent Priests and Levites to aske him, Who art thou? and all men mused whether hee were not the Christ.

l Joh. 1. 19. Luk. 3. 15

Secondly, by the place of his arising, and the Church with him, in the wildernesse [m].

m Luke 3. 2.—4. Mar. 1. 3, 4.

Thirdly, by the manner of arising, like pillars of smoake, which,

First, ariseth from fire, as the Church arose from zeale and fervency of *Johns* Ministery.

Secondly, ascendeth on high, as the propagation of this Church did, even to Jerusalem [n].

n Mat. 3. 5, 6.

Thirdly, fills the countrey, as the Church did with rumour and increase of it [o].

o Mat. 3. 5, 6.

Fourthly, by the excellent fragrancy and sweetnesse of the graces thereof perfumed [p], preserving from putrefaction: such was the powerfull zeale of *Iohn* and his Ministery, strongly fragrant as Myrrh, and preserving his hearers from Pharisaicall hypocrisie: Frankincense is of like strong fragrancy, and of chiefe use

p Chap. 1. 13. Mat. 3. 7, —10.

in

in making of the holy Incenſe [q]; by which prayer was ſignified [r], to intimate the fragrancy and fervency of his prayers, who taught all his diſciples to pray [ſ].

With all powders of the merchant.] To wit, perfumed with the ſweet graces of God, [t] filled with the holy Ghoſt above all Prophets, yea, above all that were borne of women [u]; whence alſo hee ſeaſoned all ſorts of his hearers with graces and directions fit for their ſeverall callings [x].

Fifthly, by the doctrine of *John*, who expreſly preached the Lord Jeſus manifeſted in the fleſh.

Behold his bed which is Solomons, threeſcore valiant men are about it, of the valiant of Iſrael.]

Behold his bed which is Solomons.] This Doctrine the Church of that time received and beleeved: In which Doctrine, that firſt Church firſt diſcerned and beleeved,

Firſt, the Temple of Chriſts body; for the bed [y] was taken, as alſo it is here, for the Temple, which was the type of Chriſts body [z].

Now, this as *John* pointed [a], *Behold the Lamb*

q Exod. 30 34.
r Pſa. 141. 2.
ſ Luke 11. 1.
t Luke 1. 15.
u Mat. 11. 9, 11.
x Luke 3. 10.—14.
Verſe 7.
y Chap. 1. 16. & 3. 1.
z John 2. 19, 20.
a John 1. 29, 30.

Lamb of God; as here it is said, *Behold, his bed.* This Temple it is the Temple of *Solomon*, of Christ; in him the Godhead
Col.2.9. dwelleth bodily.

Secondly, the guard of Angels attending it, to prevent the feare of *Herods* enmity and others.
Joh. 1.51. Mat.2.13, 19.

Thirdly, the maker of his humanity, verse 9. King *Solomon* made himselfe a Couch, the word may bee translated Coach or Couch: this latter I rather take, partly for the Etymologe of *Apirion*, *fol.* 38. to be fruitfull as the brides bed is, and partly for agreement with the former word bed, ver.7.

No earthly father, but Christ by his owne Spirit made his own body, and his
i Luke 1. 35. own bed in his mothers womb i.

Fourthly, the matter of it, the wood of Lebanon, for the Virgin *Mary* dwelt in Nazareth of Galilee at the foot of Lebanon.

As *Solomons* Temple, the type of Christs body, was made of the wood of
Hos.1. Lebanon, the cedar which is free from corruption; so was the body of Christ
k Psal.16. 10. found from seeing corruption k.

Fifthly, the ornaments of it, which were, First,

First, partly his offices:

1. Priestly, as pillars of silver abiding the fire of Gods wrath, and pure as silver tried in the fire. Heb. 7. 16.

2. Propheticall, delivering us a word precious as gold, even as fine gold [l]. l Psal. 19. 10.

3. Kingly, whence it is said, verse 10. *The covering of it of purple*, the royall ornament of Kings.

Secondly, partly, the affection wherein he undertooke and executed these offices, love of the daughters of Jerusalem, ver. 10. All these *John* declareth [m]. Verse 10. m John 3. 29. to the end.

Secondly, hee exhorteth and stirreth up the faithfull to behold,

First, Christ [n]. n John 1. 29.—end.

Secondly, [o] *The ornaments wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.* The day of his espousals was the day when God the Father contracted him with the Church * ; whence after hee is called the bridegroome [p], and *John* the Bridegroomes friend, his Disciples the children of the Bride-chamber: And the Church henceforward in this Booke is called the Spouse, not before. *The crowne wherewith his mother crowned him*, is the testimony of Christs soveraignty, o Ver. 11. * Mat. 3. 17 p John 3. 29.

raignty, which *John* and the faithfull gave him [q].

q John 1. 33,34,35, 49. & 3. 29.—36.

First of the estate of the Church under the Maccabees.

Use 1.

First, this doth teach us with what intent wee are to come before God in the publicke Assemblies, namely, to seeke Christ the love of our soules; not to shew our fine garments, wantonly to gaze at beauties; not to satisfie the Law or friends, for fashions sake, but to seeke Christ instructing us in temptations: Some come to catch something from Christ to entrap him, &c. but it is our duty to come unto him, as a Spouse to her Husband, for seed; so we must come to Christ, that hee may cast the seeds of grace into our soules, that we may bring forth fruit unto him.

Use 2.

† Cant. 2. 16.

* Verse 1. 2,3.

* Psal. 119 24, 25. & 30. 6, 7, 8.

Secondly, this lets us see the changeable estate of the Church; shee that rejoyced in the presence and fellowship of Christ, and could say, * *My beloved is mine, and I am his*, now seekes him every where, and with much difficulty and anguish †. And so it is oft with every true member of the Church, as wee may see it was with *David** : so it is now with our

our brethren beyond the seas, whom you might have commended a yeare or two agoe, and have found Christ there; but now he is gone, shee seekes him but findes him not: See the Church of God sometime enjoyes all the ordinances of God, sometimes none; so a Christian soule sometimes hath Christs left hand under her head, and his right hand to embrace her, soone after shee findes him not so. Wee must not condemne the Church for this; for they that are tenderly beloved of Christ may sometimes seeke him and not finde him. Cant. 2. 6.

Thirdly, this may comfort such as seeke Christ in all his ordinances: they shall either finde him in them; or, after the use of them, in some unexpected or extraordinary help. The Church here that found not Christ in the Temple, nor in the Assemblies and recourse of Christian people, nor in conference with the Priests, found him soone after in an unexpected and extraordinary help, even *Judas Maccabeus*, verse 4. for indeed it was extraordinary for the tribe of *Levi* to take up the Sword and Scepter, which indeed belonged to *Judah*: so you see when use 3.

when ordinary meanes faile, God will be found in extraordinary: Whosoever then would finde Christ, and seeke him every where, they shall surely finde him either in his ordinances, or out of them.

use 4. Fourthly, this lets us see the affectionate cleaving of such to Christ, as have long sought him and not found him till at last: such lay hold on him, and will not let him goe, *verse* 4. which is one Reason why Christ sometimes hides himselfe from us, that wee might seeke him the more diligently, and, having found him, cleave to him more stedfastly; and this God lookes for at the hands of his.

use 5. Fifthly, this doth exhort Christians that live among bad neighbours to walk the more circumspectly, as the daughters of Jerusalem are here charged upon oath to doe, ver. 5. being betweene the Syrians and Egyptians. It is a charge given by the Church to her daughters, to take heed they stirre not up her love, nor awake Christ till he please.

Two Reasons are given for it.

First, it may provoke Christ to bring another estate upon the Church which

which will not be good for it.

Secondly, in regard of fearefull Christians, for they will start away; many are willing to come into the Church, but if the profession of Christ be troublesome and hot, they will not abide it: therefore this charge is needfull that wee may walke holily, that Christ be not stirred up, nor these fearfull Christians discouraged. See this handled, *Chap.* 2. verse 7.

Thus farre the first part, in the time of the *Maccabees*: Now,

Secondly, of the estate of the Church in John Baptist's *time.*

This is first to shew us, that God can raise up a Church even in the wildernesse, to the admiration of observers: and so hee can raise up our neighbour Churches, now brought to a wildernesse. This may comfort us in regard of them; for though they be now desolate, yet we may hope a time will come when they shall rise againe. use 1. Verse 6.

Secondly, see here is a part of the duty of ancient Christians, not to maligne the graces of God in those that come after them, but to admire them*, *Who is it* use 2. * Verse 6.

that

that cometh out of the wilderneſſe like pillars of ſmoake, perfumed with Myrrh and Frankincenſe, &c.

Uſe 3. Thirdly, this ſhewes what gifts and graces are moſt requiſite in a Miniſter, and doe moſt adorne him, even zeale in his Miniſtery, and fervency in prayer, and all ſorts of ſweet graces to ſeaſon and direct all ſorts of his people in their ſeverall callings, as *Iohn* did *, when the people came and ſaid, *What ſhall we doe? He anſwered and ſaid, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none, &c.* So *Iohn* was perfumed with graces for all men: for men muſt not come into the Miniſtery with judgement and learning alone, for theſe may come from nature; but they muſt come perfumed with graces, to keep themſelves and others from putrefaction; yea, they muſt labour for thoſe graces which will give a ſtrong ſent to ſave themſelves and others.

Verſe 6. * Luke 3. 10, — 14.

Uſe 4. Fourthly, this ſhewes us the Manhood and Godhead of Chriſt; Chriſts humane nature is the temple, or bed wherein the Godhead reſteth bodily; and the Godhead made this temple or bed for himſelfe, no earthly father for him.

Verſe 7, 9.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, see here the protection and gardiance the Angels give to Christ, and in him to the Church and all his members, ver. 7,8. Use 5. Psal. 91. 11, 12. Psal. 34. 7. 2 King. 6. 16, 17. Heb. 1. 14. Rev. 5. 11. & 7. 11.

Sixthly, wee may here see in Christ whatsoever is behoovefull for all our salvations. In regard of his Priestly office hee is pure as silver, to cleanse our impurity, and to abide the fire: In regard of his Propheticall office hee is precious as gold, to enrich our poverty: In regard of his Royall and Kingly office, he is glorious as purple, and cloathed with it, to advance our baseneſſe: His heart, or middest, is even paved with love of us: His heart is an hearth (for so the word signifieth) whereon the fire of his love towards us burneth continually; let us then love the Lord Jesus againe, and receive the seeds and fruits of his grace, and then shall wee see his heart flaming with love to us: and then whatsoever befalls, bloudshed, warre, captivity, &c. all comes from love; his whole heart is paved with love. Use 6. Verse 10.

Seventhly, let us take up our thoughts and meditations about Christ; let us goe forth and behold him; let his Use 7.

abundant graces fill our empty soules.

use 8. Eighthly, if thou beest a daughter of Sion, thou art contracted to Christ; and know it by this, Dost thou read his letters? art thou delighted with them? and dost thou rejoyce to speake to him againe by prayer? If thou dost, it may be the joy of thy heart, for thy estate is good.

use 9. Lastly, this doth exhort us all to give up our selves as spouses to Christ, and that with all gladnesse of heart, since he is affected to us, who yet hath nothing from us but debts and beggery: and they that do give themselves up to Christ, need not fear wanting comfort; for no spouses shall finde such comfort as they. Shall hee be glad to have us, a company of beggers: yea, as I may say, a company of deaths? And was it the gladness of his heart to be espoused to us, which was when his Father contracted him to us, and shall wee think it a day of deading to set our feet into Christs bed? All the merchants cannot set forth our excellency, when hee shall pay all our debts, and adorn us with all his graces; therefore let us go forth, and bring him home to us, wee shall then finde him comfortable to us in the day of espousals.

THE

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 4.

BEhold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire, thou hast doves eyes within thy lockes: thy haire is as a flock of goats, that appeare from mount Gilead.

2 Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep that are even shorn, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.

3 Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

4 Thy neck is like to the tower of David, builded for an armory, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.

5 Thy two breasts are like two young Roes, that are twins, which feed among the lillies.

6 *Untill the day breake, and the ſhadowes flie away; I will get me to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincenſe.*

7 *Thou art all faire, my love, there is no ſpot in thee.*

8 *Come with me from Lebanon (my ſpouſe) with me from Lebanon: looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions dens, from the mountaines of the Leopards.*

9 *Thou haſt raviſhed my heart, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe; thou haſt raviſhed my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chaine of thy necke.*

10 *How faire is thy love, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe! how much better is thy love then wine! and the ſmell of thy oyntments then all ſpices!*

11 *Thy lips, O my ſpouſe, drop as the honey-combe: honey and milke are under thy tongue, and the ſmell of thy garments is like the ſmell of Lebanon.*

12 *A garden incloſed is my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, a ſpring ſhut up, a fountaine ſealed.*

13 *Thy plants are an orchard of pomegranates, with pleaſant fruits, camphire, with ſpikenard.*

14 *Spikenard and Saffron, Calamus and Cinnamon, with all trees of Frankincenſe, Myrrh, and Aloes, with all the chiefe ſpices.*

15 *A fountaine of gardens, a well of living waters, and ſtreames from Lebanon.*

16 *Awake, O Northwind, and come thou South, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out: let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits.*

The Explanation.

Cant. 4.1,—6. *Behold, thou art fair my love, behold, thou art fair, thou hast doves eyes within thy lockes: thy haire is as a flocke of goats, that appeare from mount Gilead, &c.*

THis Chapter describes the estate of the Church in her periods:

First, in Christs time, under his Ministery, verse 1.—6.

Secondly, after his Ascension, under the Apostles, verse 7.—11.

Thirdly, after their departure, during the first ten Persecutions, ver. 12.—16.

The Church in Christs time is commended and described,

First, by her beauty in generall, *Behold, thou art faire my love, behold, thou art faire.*

Secondly, the beauty of her severall parts, at that time most conspicuous: as,

First, *Of her eyes*, verse 1.

Secondly, *Of her haire*, verse 1.

Thirdly, *Of her teeth*, verse 2.

Fourthly, *Of her lips*, verse 3.

Fifthly, *Of her temples*, verse 3.

Sixthly, *Of her necke*, verse 4.

Seventhly, *Of her breasts*, verse 5.

Secondly, the death of Christ falling out in her time, verse 6.

Behold, thou art faire.] Faire twice repeated implies, by an usuall Hebraisme, that she was very fair: and beloved twice repeated, argues her eminent beauty was very conspicuous; such was the estate of the Church gathered by his Ministery and flocking after him.

First, it was faire and beautifull, partly in her flocking after him [a].

Secondly, leaving all to follow him, * hanging upon his mouth, and wondring at the gracious words and deeds coming from him.

Secondly, in his both,

First, presence with her, as her light [b].

Secondly, decking of her by his Ministery.

This beauty of the Church was well knowne, yet ought to have beene better observed:

First of all, by the children of wisdome [c].

Secondly, of all the [d] Greekes, even strangers [e] of the Pharisees and Elders.

Thou hast doves eyes within thy locket.] Doves (as before, *Chap.* 1. 15.) are noted

First

a Mat. 4. 25.
* Mat. 19. 19, 27. Luke 19. 48. & 9. 43.
b Joh. 3. 29 Joh. 12. 35
c Mat. 11. 19.
d John 12. 20, 21.
e John 12. 19.

Firſt, for their chaſtneſſe.

Secondly, loathing of uncleanneſſe, but there is withall in their eyes,

1. Cleanneſſe.

2. Simplicity.

This implies that the Church at that time,

Firſt, ſaw more clearely ſundry truths about Chriſt then the Fathers had done [f], or the preſent Governours [g].

Secondly, was of a ſimple and innocent looke and demeanour [h].

Thirdly, looked with a chaſte eye, after Chriſt alone [i].

Fourthly, loathed the uncleanneſſe of Phariſaicall ſuperſtitions [k].

Within thy locks.] For their knowledge, though cleare in many things, yet perceived not ſundry plaine points: as,

Firſt, the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt [l].

Secondly, the leaven of the Phariſees [m].

As the eye within lockes of haire is hindred from diſcerning things lying open before it.

Thy haire as a flocke of goats that appeare from mount Gilead.]

f Luke 10. 23,25.
g Joh.9.39
h Mat. 10. 16. Joh. 1.47.
i Joh.6.68
k Mat.15. 1,2.
l Luke 18. 32,33,34.
m Mar. 8. 15. Luke 12.1 Mat.16.6.

Haire, though it hang long upon the head, yet it may in time either,

First, fall of it selfe.

Secondly, bee cut off: so were the common Christians of that time (as it were) haire,

1. For multitude.

2. Hanging on Christ the Head.

3. Falling many of them from him:

a Joh. 6. 66 First, either of themselves [a], or,

b Mat. 27. 20. John 12. 42, 43. Secondly, cut off by the practises of the [b] Priests: hence it was that Jesus durst not commit himselfe to them [c].

c John 2. 23.—25. *As a flocke of goats.*] Which are wont,

First, to assemble themselves in companies; so did the people gather after Christ.

d Mat. 9. 36. Secondly, to be without a shepheard, as this people were [d].

Thirdly, to feed afarre off, and that somewhat dangerously, upon rocks.

e Mar. 8. 3. f Joh. 9. 22 So the people came from farre to hear Christ [e], and were in danger for feeding on him [f].

Verse 2. *Thy teeth are like a flocke of sheep that are even shorne, which came up from the washing: whereof every one beare twins, and none is barren among them.*]

The

The sheep whereto these teeth are likened, are set forth,

First, by their even-shornnesse.

Secondly, by their cleannesse, coming up from the washing.

Thirdly, by their fruitfulnesse, *Every one bringeth forth twins, none barren.*

First, even set, none gaping out.

Secondly, white and cleane.

Thirdly, each answering to his fellow in the other jaw, none wanting, as it is a praise to the teeth to be. The teeth are such as chew the meat, and prepare it for the rest of the body; such in that Church were the Apostles, whom our Saviour calls a little flock [g]: they were all,

First, even set, and even shorne, none bursting out beyond his fellowes: *Peters* supremacy stretched not beyond the rest of the Apostles [h].

The teeth of innocent sheep are even set: They that have tushes longer then the other teeth are hurtfull and ravenous beasts; as Dogs, Beares, Lions, &c. Ten of the Apostles disdained the motion of supremacy.

Secondly, came up from *Johns* Baptisme, and therefore when *Iudas* fell away

g Luke 12 32.

h Mat. 16. 19. compared with Joh. 20. 23 & Mat. 18 18. Mat. 20. 20, 25. Mark 10. 40, 42. Luke 22. 24, 25.

Act. 1.21, 22.

away, they muſt needs ſupply his place out of the number of ſuch as had continued with them from *Iohns* Baptiſme.

Secondly, they were ſutable each one to his fellow, and therefore the ſeventy

* Luk.10. 1.

were ſent out by couples *.

† Luk.10. 17,18.

But eſpecially they were fruitfull in bringing home many lambs to Chriſt; & hence the ſeventy returned with joy to Chriſt †; and Satan is ſaid to fall downe from heaven before them like lightning.

Verſe 3.

Thy lips are like a thread of ſcarlet, and thy ſpeech is comely: thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate within thy locks.

Thy lips are like a thread of ſcarlet, and thy ſpeech is comely.] Both ſignifying the delivery or utterance of the Doctrine of the Church at that time, which was,

Firſt, as a thread, ſlender, (*tenui filo*) not plump or ſwelling with humane eloquence, but ſavouring of Fiſher-like tenuity and ſimplicity.

Secondly, as a thread of ſcarlet; for as ſcarlet or purple is a princely and royall weare, ſo their Doctrine was,

* Mat. 19. 7.

Firſt, touching the kingdom of heaven*.

Secondly, though tender, yet deeply dyed in graine with royall Majeſty and autho-

authority of the Spirit of God.

Thy temples are like a piece of Pomegranate within thy lockes.] Temples of the head are they by which the whole body watcheth or reſteth; they are ſuch therefore as watch over the body, and for it. The Pomegranate was of much uſe in the old Tabernacle and Temple: * *Aarons* coat was hanged with Pomegranates and Bells; Bells for ſound of Doctrine and Prayer, Pomegranates for reſtraining and healing the diſtempers and diſeaſes of the people. Pomegranates are commended by *Fernelius* †,

* Exod. 28.34.

† Fernel. p.16.

Firſt, for repreſſing the heat of choler.

2. The malignity, rottenneſſe, and acrimony of feavers.

3. The looſeneſſe of the belly.

Secondly, for comforting and ſtrengthning the ſtomacke and bowels, to the keeping backe all fainting *. This office, the Eccleſiaſticall governours of the Church doe performe to it; they repreſſe the heat of fallings out among brethren, the notorious abuſes, the looſeneſſe, or diſtemperedneſſe of the people; they comfort the feeble, and binde up the weake, and are therefore fitly reſembled by

* Fernel. Method. medend. lib.5.ca.3.

by Pomegranates, yea, by a piece of a Pomegranate: for it is not the whole body of the Pomegranate that doth this; but it, broken in pieces, by his juice and rinde is medicinable.

Within thy lockes.] Becauſe though Chriſt eſtabliſhed Diſcipline, and delivered it to the Church in his time [k]; yet it was not diſplayed, nor ſhewed it ſelfe in open execution till after his Reſurrection [l].

[k] Mat. 18. 15.—17.

[l] 1 Cor. 5. 2.—.6. Verſe 4.

Thy necke is like the tower of David, &c.] The necke is that part that joyneth head and body together; now that which joyneth Chriſt and his Church together, is our Faith: which Faith in ſome of the members of that Church in Chriſts time, was obſerved to bee ſtrong and great *; and therefore is here fitly compared to the tower of *David*, *for an Armory*, (whereof wee read) † *whereon there hanged a thouſand bucklers, all ſhields of mighty men.* It ſeemes *Davids* mighty men hanged up their ſhields in this Armory againſt times of warre; and ſo in like manner all the Worthies of Iſrael; all the faithfull before Chriſt, hanged their ſhields of faith upon Chriſt, in whom

* Mat. 8. 10. & 15. 28.

† Neh. 9. 25, 26.

whom the faith of his Church was as a ſtrong Armory *. Faith is not ſo much a tower of ſtrength in it ſelfe, as in Chriſt whom it apprehendeth. * Heb. 11. 13.

Thy two breaſts are like two young Roes that are twinnes, which feed among the lillies. Verſe 5.

Thy two breaſts are like two young Roes that are twinnes.] The breaſts give milke: now the breaſts that give milke to the Church, the ſincere † milke of the word, are the Miniſters, which in the Church of Chriſts time were firſt the Apoſtles; ſecondly, the ſeventy: and are therefore here called two breaſts, and both as Roes, becauſe not tyed to any certaine place within all the people of the Jewes; for Roes ſtay not long in a place: And both as twins, becauſe of equall commiſſion, being both ſent alike to the whole houſe of Iſrael, though, after the Reſurrection, the Apoſtles commiſſion was enlarged further then that of the ſeventy. † 1 Pet. 2. 2.

Which feed among the lillies.] For they were ſent not onely among the Gentiles or Samaritans, but amongſt,

Firſt, the loſt ſheep of the houſe of Iſrael. Mat. 10.

Secondly,

Secondly, the true-hearted or well-affected of the Israelites.

Mat. 10. 11.

These faithfull are here compared to the lillies,

First, for their whitenesse and purity of innocency.

Secondly, for their amiablenesse.

Verse 6. *Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away: I will get mee to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.*

Untill the day breake, and the shadowes flee away.] That is, untill the light of the Gospell breake forth, and the shadowes of the Mosaicall Ceremonies vanish.

I will get me to the mountaines of Myrrh, and to the hill of Frankincense.] That is, to the Mounts,

First, of *Olivet*, } where hee suf-
Secondly, of *Golgotha*, } fered in the Garden, and on the Crosse, and nailed to his Crosse all the shadowes of the Law, and, in fulfilling them, * abolished them.

* Col. 2. 14.

Myrrh and *Frankincense*, are wont to be used in imbalming, and with such like Christ himselfe at his death was to have beene inbalmed, if his Resurrection had not prevented the women. Besides, the

John 19. 39, 40. Luke 23. 46.

passion

paſſion of Chriſt was a ſacrifice of a ſweet ſmelling ſavour to God, and therefore the place thereof is fitly called the *Mountain of Myrrh, and Hill of Frankincenſe*; though otherwiſe the mountain of Myrrh may well be mount Calvary, or Golgotha, the place of his death: and the hill of Frankincenſe mount Olivet, in regard of his Aſcenſion into Heaven; yea, even Heaven it ſelfe, whither he aſcended, may be well called the hill of Frankincenſe for ſweetneſſe.

This firſt doth teach us that a Church may be beautifull in Gods ſight, though conſiſting, Uſe 1.

Firſt, of meane perſons.

Secondly, of ſuch as were ſometimes notorious offenders, as Publicans and Harlots: and from hence,

Firſt, poore people.

Secondly, ſinners, yea, ugly ſinners are to be exhorted to repentance and ſeeking after Chriſt: It makes them truly amiable in Chriſts eyes, though otherwiſe in themſelves never ſo meane and foule.

From hence alſo poore ſinners may take comfort; though loaden with the ſenſe of their deformities, they in Chriſts

Christs eyes are very beautifull.

From hence also the Separatists may learne, that notwithstanding many abuses in their Teachers, or others of the Church, as the Scribes and Pharisees whom the people were to heare, yet the Church may be denominated from the better part very faire, as a heape of wheat, though covered over with abundance of chaffe.

Mat. 23. 23.

Secondly, this may teach Ministers how to frame themselves to be amiable in Gods sight, *viz.*

First, by carrying themselves evenly with their brethren.

Secondly, by cleansing their hearts and lives by the power of Baptisme.

Thirdly, by fruitfulnesse, and faithfulnesse in their Ministery.

Fourthly, by not affecting carnall eloquence, but gracious and deep-dyed powerfull utterance; for swelling words of humane wisdome make mens preaching seem to Christ (as it were) a blubberlipt Ministery.

Fifthly, by restraining abuses and offences amongst the people, and strengthning and comforting the feeble minded.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, by feeding their people with * ſincere milke, and not being drie nurſes. * 1 Pet. 2. 2.

Seventhly, by taking moſt delight in converſing among lillies, their well-affected people, though ſeeking alſo to winne all, and therefore ſometimes converſing with them as the Phyſicians among the ſicke.

This may teach Eccleſiaſticall Governours their office in the former vertues of the Pomegranate, to repreſſe the heat of abuſes, the looſeneſs and diſtemperedneſſe of the people, to comfort the feeble, and binde up the weake, &c. uſe 3. Verſe 3.

Fourthly, this may teach the people how to approve themſelves to Chriſt, in looking after Chriſt in knowledge, ſimplicity, chaſtity of ſpirit, loathing ſuperſtitions, and places of bad reſort.

Aſpicis ut veniunt ad candida tecta Columbæ.

Thou ſeeſt how Pigeons take their flight,
To houſes that be faire and white.

For, what ſhould Chriſtians doe in filthy Tavernes, Ale-houſes, Stews, &c. in ſtrength of faith rooting and buil-

ding themselves upon Christ.

Cant. 4. 7, —11. *Thou art all faire my love, there is no spot in thee.*] In these words wee have a description of the estate of the Church soon after Christs ascension, gathered and built up by the Ministery of the Apostles, which they call the Apostolick or primitive Church.

This Church is here set forth,

First, by her compleat beauty, her full faireneſſe, *verſ.* 7.

Secondly, by Christs calling her to behold the calling of the Gentiles, *ver.* 8.

Thirdly, by the raviſhing beauty of a ſiſter Church at that time:

1. In one of her eyes.
2. One chaine of her necke. } *verſ.* 9.

Fourthly, by her love, which is ſet forth,

1. By the faireneſſe of it.
2. By the ſweetneſſe of it above wine. } *verſ.* 10.

Fifthly, by the flowingneſſe, ſweetneſſe, and wholſomneſſe of her doctrine, *v.* 11.

Sixthly, by the ſmell of her garments, like that of Lebanon, *ver.* 11.

Thou art faire.] The faireneſſe of the Church was acknowledged before, but never

never till now the perfect faireneſſe. All compleat faireneſſe or beauty ſtandeth in theſe three things:

First, in the integrity of all the parts and members of the body; for if any be wanting, it is a maimed, a blemiſhed body.

Secondly, in the Symmetry, or fit proportion of all the members one to another.

Thirdly, in the good complexion, or colour of them all. Look what parts are requiſite for the compleat integrity of a faire Church, they are all found in the Apoſtolick Church in comely proportion of beauty; for look,

First, at their doctrine, and it was,

1. Free from all errour, ſo farre as it was diſpenſed by the Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts of that time *, who likewiſe ſuffered no weeds of falſe doctrine to grow under them *.

2. Their doctrine was compleat, even the whole counſell of God †.

3. It was diſpenſed in powerfull ſimplicity *.

Secondly, look at their worſhip, and you may ſee,

1. The purity of Gods ordinances,

* Act. 18. 12, 13.
* Rev. 2. 2.
† Act. 20. 27.
* 1 Cor. 2. 4. Act. 2. 37, 44. & 4. 4.

without mixture of humane inventions*.

2. Order, decency, edification of all aimed at in all the duties adminiſtred.

3. Fervency and frequency in prayer * and faſting.

Thirdly, looke at their Chriſtian communion, and you may ſee,

1. Their unity one with another *.

2. Love, and large-heartedneſſe one towards another †, eſpecially to their Miniſters *.

Fourthly, looke to their Diſcipline, and you may ſee the Apoſtles, Prophets, Evangeliſts, Presbyters, Paſtors, Teachers, firſt, teaching; ſecondly, exhorting; thirdly, ruling: and all by, firſt, preaching; ſecondly, writing; thirdly, private conference; fourthly, good examples: (No Churches unprovided of Presbyters, in the plurall number *.)

Thirdly, the Deacons providing for the poore, *Act.6.3.—6.*

Fourthly, both ſorts choſen by the Church, *Act 6.3,5.*

Fifthly, Excommunications diſpenſed upon weighty occaſions, and with great reverence, and with good ſucceſſe.

Sixthly, Synods impoſing no other but

* 1 Cor. 11. 23,34. & 14.26, 48.
* Act. 4. 31. & 13. 1,—3. & 14.23.
* Act. 4. 32.
† Act. 4. 32.
* Gal. 4. 14,15.
* Act. 14. 23.
1 Cor. 5. 3,—5. with 2 Cor. 2.6,—8.

but neceſſary things, either in themſelves, or for the preſent uſe of the Church, *Acts* 15. 26.

This comely frame and order of the Church *Paul* beholding, joyed in it *. The Church was now called a Spouſe after Chriſt had taken our nature upon him. * Col. 2. 5.

Come with me from Lebanon, (my Spouſe) with mee from Lebanon: looke from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the Lions dens, from the mountains of the Leopards. Verſe 8.

Come with me from Lebanon.] It is a famous hill in the uttermoſt border of Iſrael northward: *Amana* a hill more northward on the weſt of Syria, looking into Syria, Meſopotamia, Cilicia, & all Aſia the leſs.

Hermon and Shenir.] Two names of the ſame hill, though happely given to divers parts, called alſo *Syrion* or *Sien* *. * Deut. 3. 9. & 4. 48.

The Lions dens and mountaines of the Leopards.] Jeruſalem † and the Temple in our Saviours time was made a den of theeves and robbers; but in the Apoſtles time, after the Aſcenſion, the Rulers grew more fierce and cruell, ſpilling the bloud of *Stephen*, and making havocke of † Mat. 21. 13. Mar. 11. 17. Luke 19. 46.

the Church: So then, in this verse, Christ calls his Church of the Christian Jewes.

First, to behold from *Lebanon, Hermon, Amana*, the Church of the Gentiles gathered in *Antioch, Phenice, Cyrene, Cyprus, &c.*

Secondly, to come out from those dens of ravenous persecutors at Jerusalem, and to prepare her selfe to dwell among the Gentiles. Upon the persecution of *Stephen* the faithfull wandred into these parts, and preached the Gospell partly to the Jewes, and after to the Gentiles also *; whereupon great numbers of the Gentiles beleeved †: Which when tydings thereof came to Jerusalem, it was as the voice of Christ calling the Church of Jerusalem to send *Barnabas* to them, to see the Churches there and to establish them *. Afterwards when the Church of the Gentiles increased in number and grace, and the Jewes increased and grew up in blasphemy and rage against the Gospell, Christ called his Church at Jerusalem to leave those dens and mountaines of Lions and Leopards.

* Act. 11. 18, —20.
† Act. 11. 21.
* ver. 22. —24.
Act. 22. 21. & 13. 46.
Verse 9.

My sister.] This implieth that Christ now

now speaketh not to the mother Church of the Jewes, but to a sister Church, the Church of the Gentiles; such a sister as is also a spouse, a true Church, now first called a sister by reason of the accession of the Church of the Gentiles.

Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse, thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chaine of thy neck.

Thou hast ravished my heart, thou hast ravished my heart.] This implies that Christ was overcome exceedingly with the love of the Church: for such repetitions imply, in the Hebrew Phrase, a superlative excellency.

This Church so affecting Christ was *Antioch*, the first Church of the Gentiles, seated between *Amana* and *Lebanon*: for *Barnabas*, seeing the grace of God upon them, was not a little glad of it, so that his spirit was stirred up to exhort them to continue and grow up *: yea, hee went out and sought *Saul*, to bring him among them *; and they both spent a whole yeare there, and did winne much people, so that that Church was first called Christian, they first had their husbands name, the name of Christ first put

* Act. 11. 23, 24
* ver. 25, 26.

upon them, for the forwardneſſe of his love to them, and theirs to him.

With one of thy eyes.] The eyes of the Church are ſeverall, according as the Church may be ſeverally conſidered: for if the Church be conſidered as aſſembled together to publike duties, ſo the Miniſters of the Church are the eyes, amongſt whom they at Antioch excelled, as *Agabus* † and others; among whom the Lord was eſpecially delighted with *Barnabas* and *Saul*, who were ſent immediately by the Spirit of Chriſt to enlighten all the neighbour countries*. So they two, joyned in one office, were as one eye to enlighten all the parts. But if the Church be conſidered in the members apart, the eyes thereof are knowledge and faith †: In this Church faith excelled, reſting upon Chriſt alone without *Moſes* his Ceremonies, which the Jewes would have thruſt upon them *.

† Act. 11. 27, 28. & 13.1.

* Act. 13. 2. to Act. 14.27.

† John 8. 56.

* Act. 15. 1, 2, 3.

With one chaine of thy necke.] Chaines ſignified Lawes † binding as chaines. Now the Church of Antioch ſending up *Paul* and *Barnabas* to Jeruſalem, about the contention which *Cerinthus* (as the ſtories thinke) and others raiſed at Antioch

† Cant. 1. 10.

tioch concerning the necessity of the Ceremoniall Lawes; * the Apostles or Elders made a Law or decree to abrogate the Ceremonies, and yet enjoyne some things, partly necessary in themselves, as to avoid fornication; partly necessary to avoid the offences of the Jews, as to abstaine from bloud, &c. This Law the Apostles and Elders hanged as a chaine upon the necke of the Church of Antioch and other Churches†; whence that Church received great consolation*, and the other Churches establishment and increase*.

* Act. 15. 2.

† Act. 15. 23,—29.

* Ver. 31.

* Act. 16. 4, 5.

How faire is thy love my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love then wine, and the smell of thine ointments then all spices!

Verse 10.

How faire is thy love, my sister!] Sister implies the same, and such like Gentile Churches, whose love is here set forth,

First, by the fairnesse of it.

Secondly, by the strength, sweetnesse, cheerfulnesse, implied in the preferring it above wine.

How faire, and strong, and sweet, and cheerfull was the love of the Church of Antioch; which aforehand prepared a contribution of their owne accord for the

* Act. 11. 29, 30. the poor Saints at Jerusalem, even * *every man according to his ability!* The like or greater love seemed in the poore Churches of Macedonia *. A faire love for poore men to send reliefe to others: A strong love for deeply poore to send rich liberality; yet more strong and sweet to pray the messengers with much intreaty to receive it, and a cheerefull love to doe all this in abundance of joy, and beyond the Apostles owne expectation.

* 2 Cor. 8. 1, —5.

* Phil. 4. 18. This kinde of benevolence the Apostle calleth an odour of a sweet smell *; it was sweeter and better then wine. All this love shewed to the poore Saints Christ takes here as done to himselfe, as he will also take it at the last day. The decayes of this first love shewes how great this love was at the first †.

Mat. 25. 35, —40. † Rev. 2. 2, —4. Verse 10.

The smell of thine ointments then all spices.] Ointments, are the graces of Gods Spirit *: These gave a sweet report farre and neare in those Primitive Churches †.

* Cha. 1. 3. † Rom. 1. 8. Col. 2. 5. 1 Thes. 1. 6, 7, 8.

Ver. 11. *Thy lips O my Spouse, drop as the honey-combe: honey and milke are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.*

Thy

Thy lips, O my Spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue.] This commendeth the Doctrine and Ministery of those first Churches, in these foure respects:

First, for the readinesse and flowingnesse of it, it dropped forth of it selfe, it needed not to be prest and constrained, as an honey-combe.

Secondly, for the sweetnesse of it, as the honey or the honey-combe.

Thirdly, for the wholsomenesse of it, as milke.

The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon.] Lebanon is full of sweet trees of spices growing in it, which yeeld a fragrant smell even afarre off. Garments are,

First, partly the wedding garments of Christs righteousnesse.

Secondly, partly the gracious carriage wherewith they cloathed themselves in their outward conversation: They cloathed and decked themselves with Christ, not onely to their Justification, but with his Spirit to their Sanctification, which shewes forth it selfe in their humility, meeknesse, patience, honesty, faithfulnesse, diligence,

diligence, ſerviceableneſſe of their outward carriage, ſo farre forth as that the Heathen ſmelled a ſweet ſavour in their whole courſe; * yea, even in *Trajans* time, when the ſmell of garments was not ſo ſtrong: yet what a ſweet teſtimony doth *Plinie* himſelfe (though a perſecutor) give of them, when hee ſaid, hee could finde no fault with them, but that they roſe early, and went into the woods to ſing Hymnes to one *Jeſus*?

This firſt is to reforme their judgements who ſpeake of the Apoſtolicall Church as an infant and rude Church, whereas Chriſt, whoſe eyes were as a flame of fire, and who beſt knew it, commends it for perfection of beauty, and ſaith it was faire: So that if a Church were ſuch, Chriſt might imbrace it with both his armes.

This is the Church excellent for her Miniſters, excellent for common Chriſtians, which had pure eyes of knowledge and faith; ſo that by how much neerer any Church comes to this, by ſo much the fairer it is; and by how much any Church comes ſhort of it, by ſo much the fouler it is.

Secondly,

*Phil. 4. 8. 1 Theſ. 4. 9,—11. 1 Pet. 2. 12. 1 John 3. 22, 24. *Euſeb. lib. 3. cap. 30. Plin. Epiſt. lib. 10. Epiſt. 97.*

Uſe 1.

Secondly, this doth teach us that not abuses, but the toleration of them doth blemish a Church, and detract from the perfect beauty of it; for otherwise in the Primitive Churches were found Schisms, Heresies, a denying the Resurrection, uncharitable going to Law, Incest, love-feasts in the Lords Supper, strange tongues in the publicke worship; and yet because the Apostles stood out against these and reformed them, the Church still retaines her perfect beauty. In the Church of Ephesus there were false Apostles *, yet it was a Church; so it is, corruptions not cut off defile a Church: As we then desire the Church should be pure, leave we all our sinnes and corruptions which may any way blemish the beauty of the Church. Use 2. 1 Cor. 11. 13, 14. 19.—22. & 14. & 15. Chap. * Rev. 2. 2.

Thirdly, this teaches us to be ready to extoll and acknowledge (as occasion serveth) other mens labours above our owne. Christ gathered a Church in his owne time which hee called, Faire *; but this Church gathered by his Apostles hee calleth, All faire *. It grieveth him not to ascribe thousands to himselfe, and ten thousands to them; yea, hee foretold it Use 3. * Cant. 4. 1. * Cant. 4. 7.

Joh. 14. 12. it; and promised it freely aforehand: How farre was hee from a Spirit of envie and emulation, though indeed all their successe was by his grace and blessing, as *Paul* said, * *By the grace of God I am that I am*? The contrary Spirit of emulation hindereth Churches from taking that which is their own from one another.

* 1 Cor. 15. 10.

Use 4. Fourthly, hence we learn in what cases one Church may step from another, to wit,

First, when Christ leaveth a Church, and goeth away with us from it; *Come with me from Lebanon (my spouse,) with me*: So when Christ leaves and forsakes a Church, wee may leave it and goe out with him.

Secondly, when a Church is become an universall spotted Leopard, and a cruell Lion, blaspheming and persecuting the Gospell of Christ, as *

*Act. 19. 9. & 13. 50, 51.

These things were found in *Rome*, from whence wee departed not in *England*, (blessed be the Lord) from whom the Separatists would have us to depart: But Christ still vouchsafes to be with us, converting soules, feeding his lambes, hearing our prayers; wee may also worship Christ

Christ in trueth without feare of lawes, yea with acceptance. When Christ goes, let all his faithfull spouses goe with him; when there are dens of Lions, and men cannot keep the profession of Christ, but fall into their mouthes, then it is time to goe: But are there these causes now? Doth not Christ dwell here in the simplicity of his ordinances? As long as Christ is here in *England*, let us not goe away: but say, as *Peter* and * *John*, *Lord, to whom shall we goe? thou hast the words of eternall life.* As long as Christ is pleased to feed us, to drop milke and honey into our soules, let us not depart.

* Joh. 6. 68.

Fifthly, this may teach us how to knit the heart of Christ to us in ravishing affection, by cleaving to Christ with setled purpose *, by abounding in helpfulnesse to the Saints, by procuring and keeping faithfull shepherds, by burthening the Church not with many chaines of lawes, but onely with few, and those necessary: all these are formerly mentioned in the Church of *Antioch*. As ever we desire to have the Lord Jesus Christ to love us, let us grow in knowledge, faith, and all saving graces of his Spirit, and hereby shew

Use 5.

* Act. 11. 23.

Verse 9.

shew our love to him, and then we shall finde Christ ravished with our love.

Use 6. Verse 10. Sixthly, this doth teach us what kind of love Christ acknowledgeth and embraceth; to wit, faire, strong, sweet, cheerfull, in an enlarging our selves to the relieſe of his poore Saints.

Use 7. Verse 11. Seventhly, this doth teach Ministers how to make their Ministery amiable to Christ, (not to preach once a moneth, or quarterly, by the preaching of the Law, but) to be full as the honey-combe dropping out of it selfe, to preach sweet Doctrine as honey, and wholesome as milke, for the nourishment of Christs lambs.

The Pastors and Ministers of the Primitive Church did this without help of Universities: what a shame then is this for us to come short of them in such abundance of outward helps and meanes? Wouldest thou be a faithfull Minister? let thy Doctrine drop as honey, preach willingly, freely, sweetly, comfortably.

Use 8. Lastly, this may learne and stirre up Christians so to walke, and so to furnish our selves with inward graces, and with outward commendable carriage, as may yeeld a sweet savour and smell to God and

and man, that it may be like the smell of Lebanon, that men may smell a sweet savour that come neere them: let our hearts be inwardly furnished with the graces of God as with sweet oyntments; and our outward garments, our outward conversation so directed with honesty, integrity, humility, meekenesse and love, &c. that our names be not dishonoured, much lesse God by our meanes. Cast we aside stinking drunkennesse, whoredome, malice, covetousnesse, &c. And thus doing wee shall take away all offence; so doing, Christ shall look at us as his faire spouse, and say, *Thou are all faire my love*, ver. 7. Rom. 13. 13, 14.

* *A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse.*] * Cant. 4. 12. to cha. 5. 2.

After the Church gathered by the Ministery of the Apostles, next followeth that under the ten persecutions, which is here described,

First, by her restraint, *verse* 13.

Secondly, by her privacy, *verse* 14.

Thirdly, by her fruitfulnesse, refreshing and watering others, *verse* 15.

Fourthly, by her prayer in this estate: wherein consider,

1. The Petitions; which are three,

First, for the arising of the winde, and coming into the South, *ver.* 16.

Secondly, for favourable blasts of it, and that for this end, the flowing forth of her spices.

Thirdly, that Christ would come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits, *verse* 16.

2. Christs answer thereunto:

First, he cometh into his garden.

Secondly, he gathereth and enjoyeth the fruits of it.

Thirdly, he fils his Churches friends with a large measure of plenty, *Chap.* 5.1.

Verse 12. *A garden:*] The Church is here so called, as *verse* 13. *an orchard*; or as it is in the originall, *a Paradise*, as if this were the garden of *Eden*. All the world is as a wilderness, or at least a wilde field; onely, the Church is Gods garden or orchard, in these three respects:

First, as the garden of Paradise was the habitation of *Adam* in the estate of innocency, so is the Church of all those who are renewed into innocency.

Secondly, as in that garden were all manner of pleasant and wholesome herbs

herbs and trees growing, ſo in the Church are all manner of uſefull and ſavoury ſpirits.

Thirdly, as a man walketh in his garden to refreſh himſelfe; ſo doth Chriſt walke in his Church, yea and calleth his friends thither to walke with him.

A ſpring, a fountaine:] Not becauſe the Church is the fountaine of grace; but becauſe, Chriſt being in it, it is the ſpring or fountaine of the waters of life unto all *.

* Zach. 13.1. Pſal. 87.7.

A garden, ſpring, fountaine, incloſed, ſhut up, ſealed:] Not by a pale or wall of defence by Chriſtian Magiſtrates, but rather ſhut up by reſtraint; for the word ſignifies to incloſe or ſhut up, as with lockes and fetters.

Againe, the Church prayeth for the inlargement of the flowing of her ſpices, *ver.* 16. and therefore her preſent ſhutting up was uncomfortable to her.

The Church was then ſaid to be ſhut up,

Firſt, becauſe under the perſecutions it was ſhut up in priſons, and other places of puniſhment, as under lockes and fetters.

Secondly, because the Church then assembled in private close places, woods, dens, &c. and not in the open places of townes or cities.

Thirdly, because it was shut up from free accesse of forainers, men without; neither were the Emperours willing their Subjects should repaire to them, nor the Church willing to admit all promiscuously.

Verse 13, 14. *Thy plants:*] That is, thy children or members, as an orchard of *Pomegranates, Camphire*, verse 14. *Spikenard, Safron, Calamus, Cinnamon.* The children of the Church are compared to these wholesome and sweet fruits, trees, herbs, in a double respect:

First, because the vertues of these fruits and spices are especially seen when they are cut and powred out, or beaten, or burned, or bruised: So it is with the graces of Gods children; they are chiefly exercised by the hard dealing of persecutors.

Secondly, there was in the faithfull then persecuted a resemblance of the vertues of these fruits and spices.

Pomegranates. *Pomegranates* represse and restraine the

the heat of choler, the malignity of fevers, the looseneſſe of the belly; they alſo comfort the ſtomack and bowels, and prevent faintings and ſwoonings.

Camphire, with his ſweetneſſe of ſmell, delighteth and ſtrengthneth the ſpirits, cheereth up the minde, helpes the ſtone, reſtraines ulcers. Camphire.

Spikenard ſtayeth diſtillations from the head, ſtrengthneth the ſtomack, digeſteth cold humours, helpeth conception. Spikenard

Saffron thinneth flegme, helpes lethargies, coughs, and pluriſies, furthereth digeſtion, comforteth the heart, redreſſes the rottenneſſe of the other parts, which alſo are ſtrengthned. Safron.

Calamus helps the paſſages of the urine, and the faults of the reines, helpeth alſo the womb and conception. Calamus.

Cinnamon ſtrengthneth and cheereth the ſpirits and minde, dryeth up rotten matter, helpeth againſt poyſon, warmeth and ſtrengthneth the ſtomacke to digeſtion. Cinnamon

Frankincenſe reſtraineth and helpeth ulcers, gouts, fluxes of bloud, cleanſeth and glueth up wounds and ulcers. Frankincenſe.

Myrrh.

Myrrh refresheth the braine, drieth up superfluous humours, helpeth straitnesse of breath, restraineth ulcers and itchinesse, filleth ulcers and wounds with flesh.

Aloes. *Fernelius de method. medend lib. 4. cap. 7, 9, 19, 21, 27, 26, 27. lib. 6. cap 12, 13, 14, 12.*

Aloes cleanse tough flegme and choler, drie up raw and cold humours, preserve the rest from putrefying, open obstructions, strengthen the stomack strongly.

Sutable to the vertues of these fruits and spices, persecution bred and stirred up in the faithfull graces of like efficacy, to restraine heats of emulation, contention, ambition, to represse ulcers of malignity and dis-affection one to another, to heale the coldnesse, hypocrisie, and rottennesse of their spirits; to stay distillations of cold raw matters, dropping from the head Bishops of Rome; as also to strengthen appetite to the Word, to comfort the faint-hearted, to knit the members together.

Verse 15.

A fountaine of gardens, &c.] For the Church, pouring out her confessions and martyrdomes for the truth, propagated and watered many Churches; for, *sanguis martyrum* was *semen Ecclesiæ*, *a Well of living waters.* The Church was not

Joh. 4. 10.

then

then dryed up, but plentifully ſtored with the graces of the ſpirit, *Streames from Lebanon:* The Churches were ſtored with ſuch graces of the Spirit, as ſtreamed and iſſued out from the mountaines of Iſrael, the writings of the Prophets and Apoſtles.

Awake, or ariſe, O Northwind, &c.] The Churches deſire that a winde might ariſe in the North, and come into the South: to wit, that *Conſtantine*, born in *York*, would come into the ſoutherne parts, and take the Empire upon him, (*and blow upon my garden*) driving away the blaſts of Eaſterly perſecutions, and breath favourably and wholeſomly upon the Church, cooling the tempeſtuous heats of the perſecutions which the Church endured. The Church prayeth not the South to come, but the North to come into the South, elſe Verſe 16.

Firſt, the word *blow*, if it had reference to both winds, ſhould have been of the plurall number.

Secondly, Northwinde and Southwinde blowing together, would interrupt and croſſe one another by their contrariety.

Verse 16. *That the spices thereof may flow forth.*] That the Gospell and Ordinances of Christ and the graces of his children, which were there restrained from their free manifestation by the persecutions, might have free passage.

Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat of his pleasant fruits.] Let *Constantine* come to them, and partake of the benefits of the Churches serviceable graces to God and him.

THE

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 5.

I *Am come into my garden, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, I have gathered my Myrrh with my ſpice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunk my wine with my milke: eate, O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.*

2 *I ſleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, ſaying, Open to mee my ſiſter, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.*

3 *I have put off my coat, how ſhall I put it on? I have waſhed my feet, how ſhall I defile them?*

4 *My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.*

5 *I roſe up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped*

dropped with Myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling Myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.

6 I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had with-drawn himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

7 The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals took away my vaile from me.

8 I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that yee tell him, that I am sick of love.

9 What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou faireſt among women? What is thy beloved more then another beloved, that thou doſt so charge us?

10 My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thousand.

11 His head is as the moſt fine gold, his lockes are bushy and black as a Raven.

12 His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set.

13 His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh.

14 His hands are as gold rings set with the Beryl: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

15 His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold, his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

16 His mouth is moſt sweet, yea, he is altogether

ther lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jeruſalem.

The Explanation.

Cant. 5. verſe 1. *I am come into my garden, my ſiſter, my ſpouſe, I have gathered my Myrrh with my ſpice, I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, I have drunke my wine with my milke: eate, O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.*]

Conſtantine came into the Church, enjoyed the fellowſhip of it, did partake in all the parts of it, yea and richly endowed it; ſo that the Church and all her friends did eat and drinke, yea and did drink abundantly of wealth, preferments, &c. whence it was that ſhe fell into a deep ſleep. Chap. 5. verſe 1. Ch. 4. 12.

Firſt, this ſerves to ſtirre us up to thankefulneſſe and fruitfulneſſe to God, who hath planted us not in the wilderneſſe of the world, but in the garden of his Church. If wee now tranſgreſſe as *Adam* did, eating of the forbidden fruits, * God will take his garden from us, and caſt us out of it. Uſe 1. * Gen. 3. 6, 11, 12, 14. & 2. 17.

Secondly,

use 2. Secondly, this lets us see, all the goodly situations of the earth are but dunghils and deserts, in comparison of the Church, the Church is a garden, and in it are fountaines of living waters for every thirsty soule.

use 3. Thirdly, though the Church be sometimes in open view of all, as a City set on a hill; Mat. 5. 14. yet it is sometimes also otherwise, inclosed, shut up, sealed.

use 4. Fourthly, when the Church is shut up in corners and conventicles, the members of which not treasons, schismes, factions, but still remaineth as a garden, orchard, fountaine, yeelding sweet waters, savoury and wholesome fruits.

use 5. Fifthly, see the wonderfull use of afflictions and persecutions to the Church; what savoury, and wholesome and precious graces are thereby exercised; yea, how mightily doth the Church then spread when it is most restrained?

use 6. Sixthly, see then what the weapons of the Church were against their persecutors, not daggers, dags, powder, pistols, rebellions, treasons, &c. but prayers for more seasonable times.

use 7. Seventhly, wee are to be stirred up to pray,

pray, that God would now stirre up a wholesome Northwinde, to blow favourably upon the Churches beyond the seas, and strongly against their enemies.

Eightly, this may teach us whilest we enjoy at home these faire blasts, not to streame forth the unsavoury corruptions of our owne spirits, but the sweet graces of God; else wee abuse these sweet opportunities wee doe enjoy. *Use 8.*

Lastly, it is a time of much rejoycing when God stirreth up Kings and Princes to come into the fellowship of the Church, and to partake of Gods ordinances in the same. *Use 9.*

I sleepe, but my heart waketh, it is the voyce of my beloved that knocketh, saying, &c.] Cant. 5. 2. to Chapt. 6. ver. 4.

Now followeth the description of the estate of the Church from *Constantines* time to the time of restoring of the Gospell, and reforming of the Church by the Ministery of *Luther*, and other late Divines.

After that *Constantine* had largely endowed the Church with peace, and wealth, and honour; it fell into an estate of

of carnall ſecurity; which carnall ſecurity is deſcribed,

Firſt, by a compariſon, reſembling it to ſleep; which ſleep of hers is amplified by the divers conditions, yet *my heart waketh.*

Secondly, by the carriage of Chriſt towards her in this her ſleepe; where obſerve,

1. The meanes he uſeth to awake and ſtirre her up: which were,

Firſt, calling to her and knocking, as *verſe* 2.

Secondly, putting in his hand by the hole of the doore, *verſe* 4.

2. The ſucceſſe of thoſe meanes, or the reſpect ſhe gave to them, or the uſe ſhee made of them; which was double,

Firſt, his calling and knocking ſhe neglecteth wholly, upon very ſlight pretences and excuſes, *verſe* 3.

Secondly, his putting in his hand by the hole of the doore;

1. She is affected with it: *My bowels were moved for him*, ver. 4.

2. She upon it ſought him: which is further ſet forth,

Firſt, by the degrees of her ſeeking him: 1. She

1. She aroſe to open to him, *verſe* 5.

2. Her hands and fingers dropped Myrrh upon the handles of the locke, *verſe* 5.

3. She opened to her beloved, *ver.* 6.

Secondly, by the fruits or ſucceſſe of her ſeeking, where is interpreted the fruit or ſucceſſe of theſe two degrees of her ſeeking, in regard,

1. Of Chriſt, *he was gone, he had withdrawn himſelf*, &c. *ver.* 6.

2. Of the watchmen, of whom ſhee asketh not for her beloved; but they finding her ſeeking Chriſt, they

Firſt, ſmote her.

Secondly, wounded her.

Thirdly, tooke away her vaile from her, *verſe* 7.

Fourthly, ſhe, not diſcouraged with this bad dealing and hard uſage of the watchmen, added a fourth degree in her ſeeking of Chriſt; ſhee chargeth the daughters of Jeruſalem to move Chriſt for her, *ver.* 8. The ſucceſſe or fruit whereof is added; for upon this charge,

1. The daughters of Jeruſalem are ſtirred and occaſioned to enquire of her, who Chriſt is, *verſe* 9.

2. She

2. She by their enquiry is occasioned to describe him,

First, by his colours, *verse* 10.

Secondly, by his eminency, *verse* 10.

Thirdly, by his severall members and parts, *verse* 11, —16.

Fourthly, by his amiableness, *verse* 16.

3. The daughters of Jerusalem by this her description of him, are stirred up to affect him, and to promise their fellowship in seeking of him with her, *Chap.* 6. 1.

Verse 2. *I sleepe.*] The Church surfeiting with abundance of prosperity in *Constantines* time, neglected the purity and power both of doctrine and worship, and received corruptions; of which were prayers to Saints, building of Temples to them, Superstitious regard of their reliques, Images, and their worship, Ceremonies annexed to their Sacraments, choice of meats, affecting and applauding Monkish life, Purgatory, &c.

My heart waketh.] The Church was still awake,

First, to hearty devotion, according to their knowledge, and beyond it.

Secondly,

Secondly, to discerne some such grosse heresies as quenched the heart and life of Christianity; as the impiety of *Arius*, denying the Godhead of Christ; *Macedonius* and *Eunomius*, denying the person of the holy Ghost; of *Nestorius*, dividing the person in Christ; of *Eutyches*, confounding their natures: other straw and stubble built upon the foundation they neglected.

It is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open.] Christ used good meanes to awaken his spouse, and to raise her up from this carnall security.

First, he calleth to her in the voice of sundry good Divines, who complained of the intolerable burthen of humane inventions, wherewith the common Christians were defiled and dabled, as Christ here complaines: His locks and haire were full of the drops of the night; drops with coldnesse of Religion and darknesse of ignorance ingendred. *August. ep. 119.*

Secondly, he knocked by the raps and blowes which *Constantius*, *Valens*, and *Julian* gave to the Church; the two former persecuting the orthodox Bishops and Ministers and other Christians, in favour of the *Arians*; and *Julian* making flat

Apostasie from the Church, and subtlely supplanting the nursing of Religion.

Verse 3. *I put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?*

I have put off my coat.] Thus upon sleight pretence the Church refuseth to open to Christ: shee pretends Religion and the worship of God would appear too naked, if it were not cloathed with goodly and comely humane inventions; how then should shee in so naked a manner open to Christ? Humane inventions do not clothe Religion, or the Church professing it with any comely ornaments; but, as it were with warme blankets, lap her and lull her asleep in the bed of perfunctory worship and carnall security.

I do not here conceive that the Church acknowledgeth she hath cast off her garments of Christs righteousnesse; for then how should shee remaine the spouse of Christ? yea, how then should her heart have beene otherwise then asleep too? but onely shee pleadeth shee should appeare too naked if shee should open to Christ, if she should worship him in the simplicity and nakednesse of his simple ordinances.

I

I have washed my feet.] Not with the layer of regeneration, for that would have beene no impediment, but a furtherance to the pure worship of God; but shee had washed her feet, shee had freed and cleansed her conversation from defilements of secular affairs: shee had taken up a devout regard of virginity, or hermitish or monkish solitary retirednes; shee being cleansed and washed in these devices, cannot betake her selfe to worship the Lord in his simple ordinances, and in the wayes of her calling, without some defilement: Thus marriage and worldly businesse (though both allowed by God, yet) seem a defilement, in comparison of more strict superstitious devotion.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him. Vet. 4.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore:] Or, *My beloved put downe his hand by the hole of the doore.*] Either of which imply, that Christ did at first use meanes for himselfe to open the doore, when shee would not; attempting to remove the impediments which hinder him from enjoying his spouse: First, *put his*

hand by the hole of the doore, when hee ſtirred up Chriſtian Emperors, ſuch as *Martianus*, and both the *Theodoſii*, to call Synods, and to command the Fathers aſſembled, to give all diligence to root out all hereſies, and depravations of doctrine and worſhip, that the pure and holy faith might ſhine forth.

How eaſily might the Church upon ſuch encouragements, have broken the barres and bolts of Superſtition crept into the worſhip of God, whereby Chriſt was debarred from drawing neer to them? The Biſhops aſſembled in thoſe Councels of that time, condemned thoſe groſs hereſies which blaſphemed the doctrine of the Trinity; but how deeply did they neglect to redreſſe all other enormities and corruptions? Beſides, Chriſt is ſaid to put in his hand by the hole of the door, when he puts his ſpirit, which is the power and finger of God*, into the hearts of his people, whereby they are enlightened to know him better, and ſtirre up men honeſtly to ſeeke after him. So Chriſt enlightened and ſtirred up *Leo Iſauricus*, *Conſtantines* ſonne, and *Leo Copronymus*, to bend their beſt endeavours to root out Idolatry, and

* Mat. 12. 28. with Luke 11. 20.

to

to remove Images, which were one of the chiefest abuses in Gods worship.

My bowells were moved for him.] These good Princes, and other Christians at that time were strongly and inwardly affected to the purity of Gods worship, in which alone Christ is found.

I rose up to open to my beloved, and my hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke. Verse 5.

I rose up to open to my beloved.] The Church under these good Emperours rose up out of the blankets of these humane inventions wherewith shee was covered, in a bed of sleeping devotion, and endeavoured to restore openly the simplicity of Gods worship, rejecting Images and Idolatry.

My hands dropped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locke.] The endeavours of the Church were sweet, and delectable, and acceptable to Christ, and savoury to the people, to preserve them, as myrrh, from further persecution, when *Constantine* the sonne of *Leo Isaurius*, called the seventh *Constantinopolitan* Councell, and there truly

ly and solemnly convinced and condemned the worship of Images. As also when *Charles* the Great did the like some forty years after, at a Synod in Frankford.

Ver. 6. *I opened to my beloved, but my beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone: my soule failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not finde him: I called him, but he gave me no answer.*

I opened to my beloved.] This attempt of the Church in executing in some places the decrees of those Synods, was an opening of the doore to Christ: Images and Idolatry being shut forth, there is a doore open for Christ to enter.

But my beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone.] Christ did not delight to reveale himself in their publike assemblies, though Images were in some places well removed, both because those decrees for removing of Images were not generally received and executed, through the coming in of the Bishop of Rome; and because the worship of God was still full of Heathenish and Jewish superstitions, which Christ tooke no pleasure in.

My soule failed when he spake.] The faithfull in those times were assembled with

with feare and griefe, to consider how Christ now speaketh to them afarre off, comes not neare to their hearts and consciences; so that now, though they used such meanes to finde him as the times afforded, yet Christ did take no pleasure in those meanes, in those worships, nor to their sense, in those that used them.

The watchmen that went about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the walls tooke away my vaile from me. Ver. 7.

The watchmen that went about the city found me.] Those watchmen are the Bishops and Ministers of that time; as also the *keepers of the walls* may well be the Magistrates: for civill government is a wall to defence to the Church of God.

They found me.] And yet the Church enquireth not of them, as shee had done before of other watchmen, * *Have you not seen him whom my soule loves?* For shee knew these watchmen were of another spirit, rather wolves in sheeps cloathing, and more ready to beat her from Christ, then to bring her to Christ. They smote me with censures of Excommunications, as *Gregory* the third Pope of Rome did *Leo Isauri-* * Chap. 3. 3.

ricus for his endeavours. Afterwards, when ſundry Chriſtians, having intelligence that the Biſhops and Doctors were aſſembled in a temple at *Byzantium*, to give ſentence for reſtoring of Images, in the dayes of the Empreſſe *Irene*, came upon them, and forced them with weapons to leave off ſuch decrees; theſe people were afterwarps diſarmed aud baniſhed into ſundry Iſlands. Thus were the faithfull ſmitten with the cenſures of Excommunication by the watchmen of the city; of baniſhment by the keepers of the walls.

They wounded me.] With the Canons of the ſecound Councel of *Nice*; whither that Councell, aſſembled in the temple of *Byzantium*, and ſcattered by the people, was afterwards tranſlated by the Counce of the Biſhops of Rome. In this Councell Images were againe reſtored, to the great griefe of the godly, yea, to the wounding of their hearts. The ſentence of a generall Councell in the behalfe of any error is no ſmall wound to the whole Church.

They tooke away my vaile from me.] When they forced the Biſhops of *Rhodes*, *Nice*, *Neo-Ceſarea*, *Hierapolis*, and others

to

to recantation, who before had worthily opposed Images. To bring men to open recantation, to lay open their nakednesse, especially when they recant from the truth, is to take away the vaile.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem, if yee finde my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sicke of love. Verse 8.

I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem.] The Church finding her selfe so hardly dealt with by the Ministers and Magistrates, would not give over her search after Christ; yet now seeketh him in the fellowship of private Christians, and stirreth them up to pray for her.

Tell him I am sicke of love.] That is, in your prayers acknowledge that the Church is ready to faile and perish for want of his presence and fellowship in his publike ordinances.

What is thy beloved more then another beloved, O thou fairest among women? &c.] Verse 9.

The Christians, the daughters of Jerusalem, from this day forward, to the dayes of *Peter Waldus* (of whom the *Waldenses* tooke their name), were very ignorant of Christ, and therefore they aske who hee was,

was, and wherein better then another: But in stead of him they magnified the Church; *Holy mother Church* was all in all with them: Her they acknowledged to be fairest among women, though they see nothing in Christ better then in another.

Ver. 8.

Ver. 10. *My beloved is white and ruddy, &c.* Thus *Petrus Waldus*, a citizen of Lions, opened Christ to the daughters of Jerusalem, to the children of the Church, setting before them the white innocency of true holinesse in him, and the ruddy scarlet dye of his death. The righteousnesse and death of Christ plainly, yet powerfully opened by him, brought many to behold Christ, and to professe him; who (when by persecution stirred up against them by the Bishop of Rome, they were dispersed into many places) multiplied exceedingly, and being then called *Albingenses*, in many battels fought against the souldiers which Pope *Innocent* the third had sent against them, under conduct of *Simon Mounteford*, and others signed with the crosse: in many of which the *Albingenses* prevailed; helped by *Reymund* Earle of *Thelus*, and *Peter* King of *Aragon*; though after-

Ver. 9.

afterwards they were overcome and scattered further into many places of Christendome. So in regard of these troups of many thousands, Christ is here called the *standard-bearer*, as the word signifieth, or the *choyce of ten thousand*. Againe, at that time Christ may be said to be white and ruddy in regard of his members, who were then white with innocency of life, yet ruddy, enduring persecution.

His head is as the most fine gold, his lockes are bushie, and black as a raven. Ver. 11.

His head is as the most fine gold.] Christ comes now to be described in his members more particularly. This head of gold Christ shewed on the earth in the person of *Frederick*, the second Emperour of *Rome*, a Prince of much purity and worth, as an head of the Church of fine gold: He contended with many Popes about the headship of the Church, advanced the headship of Christ and of himselfe, his Vicegerents, above the counterfeit head of the Popes Supremacy. He wrastled for Christ against them with much difficulty, yet prevailed, so that even in the Popish schools, his election of God was agreed and condescended unto by sundry.

His

His locks are bushie, or *curled, and black as a rauen.*] Curled black haire is a signe of heat and courage, and wit in him that it groweth upon: such was the Emperour himself, and such were the common Christians of that age that did depend upon their Emperour; they stuck close to him: learned men with wit, more then former ages had yeelded, and souldiers with courage maintained his person and cause.

Verse 12. *His eyes are as the eyes of doves by the rivers of water, washed with milke, and fitly set.*]

Doves, diving in rivers of waters, dive their bellies deep into the waters; so that their eyes looke close and narrowly upon it.

First, the eyes are here set forth by their care of the Church; hee is not so farre off removed from it, that he had need of the Pope to be his visible Vicar to look to it.

Secondly, by their milde innocency, implyed, in that they are doves eyes and washed with milke; whereas the Popes eyes were as hawkes eyes, looking eagerly after the prey.

Thirdly, by their fit standing, so as they may well looke to the whole body; whereas

whereas the Popes eyes cannot possibly watch to looke well to the estate of the Church so far off him.

To this purpose tended the doctrine of the faithful Divines in the following age, such as *Michael Cesenus*, *Petrus de Carbania*, *Iohannes de Poliaco*, and such as followed them.

His cheekes are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling Myrrh. Ver. 13.

His cheeks are as a bed of spices.] Cheekes imply the outward face of the faithfull Church, for the cheeks are a place most conspicuous, which shewes that the faithfull of those times were as beds of spices and sweet flowers, to wit, not gathered into any set garden, as afterwards in *Luthers* time,* but scattered here and there, yet of sweet and precious savour in the nostrils of Christ: yea, one *Nicholaus de Bibrath*, living about that time, compareth Faith and Piety in the Church to spice rare and deare. *Cha. 6. 2.

His lips like lillies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.] The doctrine of the Church at those times was such, as like myrrh, served to preserve the faithfull from putrefaction,

* Rev. 2. 25.

† Can. 4. 11.

Ver. 14.

treſaction, according to that, * *That which ye have already, hold faſt till I come.* In the Primitive Apoſtolique Church her lips dropped like an honey-combe, being of ſtrong ſweet reliſh to delight and nouriſh to full growth: † But the lips of this Church drop rather myrrh then honey; they rather preſerved ſome truth of grace then yeelded any abundant nouriſhment to procure increaſe to the Church.

His hands are as gold rings ſet with the Berill: his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.

His hands are as gold rings ſet with the Beril.] Hands are inſtruments of action, their being ſet with *gold rings* implyeth their purity and dignity: The *Beril* cleareth moiſture and dimme ſight: *Franciſcus Rudis, de Gema. libr. 2. cap. 8.* All theſe ſhew that the Miniſtery of the Goſpell ſhould be then more powerfull; and indeed God, about that time, *Anno* 1300. ſtirred up *Dantes, Marcillius, Potavinus, Ocham, Gregorius Ariminenſis, Petrarchus, Wickliffe*, and many more, whoſe Miniſtry brought on ſo many, that ſome have counted it the firſt reſurrection; yea, the Magiſtrates of that time, *Ludovicus Bava-*

the Emperour, *Philip* of *France*, *Edward* the third of *England*, stood out in many things against the Pope, as those whose hands had got more strength, and better felt their owne worth, and whose eyes were cleered to see more light then their predecessours.

His belly as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires.] The belly is an hidden part of the body, yet such from which the rest is nourished; which fitly resembleth the Sacraments here, as also *Ch.*7.2. which being hid from those that are without, yet nourish the whole body, as an heap of wheat. The doctrine of the Sacraments, and the pure administration of the same, was at this time restored by *Iohn Wickliff*, & embraced by his followers, though condemned in the Councell of Constance. These Sacraments are said to be overlaid with Saphires, whose property is to strengthen and cherish the principall solid parts, *because of the efficacy of the Sacraments truly taught and administred, to strengthen and quicken Gods graces in us.

* Rucus Deginus l.1. cap.2.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars. Ver.15.

His

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.] These two legs seeme to be *Iohn Hus* and *Ierome* of *Prague*, who stood constantly in defence of the truth, even unto death, being established in the truth and grace of God, as it were *pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.*

His countenance is as Lebanon.]

The faithfull grew so plentifull in *Bohemia*, that they seemed even to the adversary to be like a thick wood (as many and firme) which they were not able to hew downe; and therefore they were forced in the Councell of *Constance*, to allow them the use of the cup in the Lords Supper, because they could not by strong hand keep them from it.

Excellent as the cedars.] The cedar is a tree eminent for talnesse, and soundnesse or durablenesse: such was then the face and countenance of the Church, observed to grow up in conspicuous eminency, and in soundnesse of love to the truth, that the Popish Teachers were not able to corrupt them any longer with their seducements.

Verse 16. *His mouth is most sweet, yea, hee is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and*

and this is my friend, O Daughters of Jeruſalem.

His mouth is moſt ſweet.] The doctrine of the Goſpell was taught more and more ſavourly by *Johannes Rocheſana*, and other Miniſters in *Bohemia*.

He is altogether lovely, or *deſireable*.] Chriſt then began againe ſo to diſpenſe himſelfe to his Church, in giving them the faith and ſenſe of his goodneſſe, that now they ſaw or found nothing in Chriſt, or in the profeſſion of his name, but what was wholly deſirable. The rebukes of Chriſt began now to ſeeme greater riches, then the treaſures of *Egypt* or *Babylon* in ſome former ages: they that ſaw the truth were often brought to yeeld and recant; but theſe ſaw nothing to be more deſired then Chriſt. Beſides, he is now called holy and deſirable, becauſe ſo many ſo generally were ſtirred up to deſire and ſeeke reformation. The Regions were white and ready to the harveſt, elſe *Luther* had not found ſuch good ſucceſſe in his Miniſtery. Heb.11. 26.

This is my beloved, and this is my friend.] The doctrine of certainty of our ado-

tion, Justification, Salvation, began now more plainly to be discerned and acknowledged: Christ is not onely faire and desireable in himself; but then the Church could more boldly say, *This is my beloved, this is my friend.*

THE

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text. Chap. 6.

Whither is thy beloved gone, O thou faireſt among women? whither is thy beloved turned aſide? that we may ſeek him with thee.

2 *My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of ſpices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.*

3 *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.*

4 *Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jeruſalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

5 *Turne away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me: thy haire is as a flock of goats that appeare from Gilead.*

6 *Thy teeth are as a flock of ſheepe which goe*

up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twinnes, and there is not one barren among them.

7 As a piece of Pomegranate are thy temples within thy lockes.

8 There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and virgins without number.

9 My Dove, my undefiled is but one; she is the onely one of her Mother, shee is the choice one of her that bare her: The daughters saw her, and blessed her: yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they praised her.

10 Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, faire as the moone, cleare as the sunne, and terrible as an army with banners?

11 I went downe into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranats budded.

12 Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like the Chariots of Aminadab.

13 Returne, returne, O Shulamite; returne, returne, that we may looke upon thee: what will you see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two armies.

THE

The Explanation.

Cant.6.1. *Whither is thy beloved gone? O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him with thee.*]

THe Churches affectionate describing and praising Christ, stirred up many then to looke after Religion and Reformation. Chap.6. verse 1.

First, wee may here see the danger of surfeiting the Church with wealth and pleasures and honour. *Constantine* had in the first verse enebriated the Church with wealth and honour, and hereupon the Church falleth into a long sleepe, which shee shook not wholly off for many ages. No wonder then of that speech heard from heaven, *Hodiè venenum concidit in Ecclesiam:* Now is poyson powred or fallen into the Church. Use 1.

Secondly, this may let us see that they have not the spirit of the Church of Christ, that when they heare many voices in Religion carried sundry waies, know not whom to follow, cannot discern which Use 2.

is the true voice of Christ among them: This Church here could discern the voice of Christ even in her sleep, how much more easily if she had been well awake?

Use 3. Thirdly, this is to exhort both Ministers and other faithfull Christians to watchfulnesse, lest otherwise corruption in doctrine and worship grow amongst the people, till the locks of Christ be wholly dabled with superstitions; the locks of Christ, to wit, the common Christians.

Use 4. Fourthly, this may teach us to know that they provide not well for the direction of their own judgements, that depend upon the voice of the ancient Churches for their chief pattern and guidance in doctrine and worship: who would build upon the words of a man (though otherwise a good man) when he is half asleep?

Use 5. Fifthly, hence we may discern it is better the Church should open to Christ, appearing before him in the naked simplicity of his worship, then to cover our selves and his worship with the blankets and inventions of mens weaving, which will but lull the Church asleep in drowsie performances of perfunctory worship, and cause Christ to withdraw himself from us.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, this may teach us to know, to our shame and griefe, that our drowsie hearts will neglect to open to Christ upon his calling and knocking, unless he be pleased to put the finger of his spirit into our hearts, to open an entrance for himselfe. Use 6.

Seventhly, the faithfull must not wonder, if, opening their hearts to Christ and seeking after him, sometimes they finde him not; for it was so with the Church here, and hath been so with the faithfull in all ages: We neglecting to receive him when hee offereth himself, wee must not wonder if for a time he neglect us. Use 7.

Eighthly, we may from hence learn that bad Ministers wil sooner bear with any disorder in people, then serious seeking after Christ, and after the purity of ordinances. Use 8.

Ninthly, we may here see persecutions alienate not the affections of the faithful, but inflame them to more ardency and earnest pursuite after Christ, as this Church did. Use 9.

Tenthly, it may be known the Church hath lyen in a deep sleep, when common Christians can more acknowledge the Church then Christ himself, when they can see her to be *the faireſt among women*, but know not any eminent worth in Christ. Use 10.

Use 11. Eleventhly, the estate of many Churches, in many ages, maketh but one body of Christ; in every of which Christ manifesteth himself, in some members more eminently then in others.

Use 12. Twelvethly, Christ had his faithfull people and members in the world before *Luther* was born; yea, he shewed himself glorious in sundry of them, in the darkest times of Popery.

Use 13. Thirteenthly, in Christ it's well known there is nothing but what is lovely and desirable; even persecutions for his sake are lovely and glorious.

Use 14. Fourteenthly, it is no comfort, or but small, to know Christ to be every way precious and excellent, unlesse wee can also say, hee is ours: *This is my beloved, this is my friend, O yee daughters of Jerusalem.*

Use 15. Fifteenthly, the affectionate faithfull preaching and setting forth of Christ, stirreth up in others a saving knowledge of Christ, and hearty affection to him. The Church here describeth Christ affectionately and faithfully, speaketh of him as her owne; whence the daughters of *Jerusalem* are converted and stirred up to seek after him. Lastly,

Lastly, hearts truely touched with sincere desire after Christ, chose rather to seek him in the Church, in the fellowship of the Church, then by waies of separation, as this Church did: *Whither is thy beloved turned aside? that we may seeke him with thee.* use 16.

My beloved is gone into his garden.] The holy Ghost in these words descendeth to set forth the state of the Church reformed by the Ministery of *Luther*, and other late Divines, as in the verse following the calling of the *Jewes*. Cant. 6. 2, 9.

This reformed Church is diversly described:

First, by Christs visitation of her, together with the ends thereof:

1. *To feed in the gardens.*
2. *To gather lilies*, verse 2.

Secondly, by her mutuall fellowship with Christ, *verse* 3.

Thirdly, by her degrees of rising: wherein she is likened to be, *verse* 4.

1. As *Tirzah.*
2. As *Jerusalem.*
3. As *an army with Banners.*

Fourthly, by her members, *ver.* 5, 6, 7.

1. *Eyes.*

2. *Haire.*

2. *Haire*.
3. *Teeth.*
4. *Temples.*

Fiftly, by compariug the ſeverall reformed Churches, as amongſt themſelves, and preferring one above the reſt of the reformed Churches there.

1. As *Queenes*, 60.
2. As *Concubines*, 80.
3. As *Virgins without number*, verſe 8.
4. As *a Dove*; and who,

Firſt, to Chriſt is undefiled.

Secondly, to the whole Church as an *onely one*, as *a choice one.*

Thirdly, to the reſt:

1. Bleſſed, to the *Daughters.*
2. Praiſed, to the *Queenes* and *Concubines*, verſe 8, 9.

Verſe 2. *My beloved is gone downe into his garden, to the beds of ſpices, to feed in the garden, and to gather lilies.*

My beloved is gone, downe into his garden:] The Church, which Chriſt next viſited, and wherein he was firſt found in that generall Apoſtaſie wherein the Church ſought Chriſt and could not find him.

In the former Chapter was the Church of

of *Wittenburg* reformed by the Ministery of *Luther*, which was a garden, being

First, stored with variety of godly people, as sweet flowers set in order, some teaching, some hearing.

Secondly, fenced in as with a hedge, pale or wall, by the protection of *Frederick* the good Duke of *Saxony*.

Thirdly, a place wherein Christ walked (as wee doe in our gardens) to refresh himselfe and his friends.

Is gone downe into his garden.] Descending from those famous cities and eminent places of *Rome* and *Constantinople*, into a meane country city.

To the beds of spices.] Because in *Germany*, at that time, sundry Christians were called and sorted into severall beds and companies in severall places, though not attaining at the first to be so many gardens, so many severall Churches.

To feed in the garden.] In processe of time, these severall beds of spices (companies of Christians) grew up to the fashion of just and full Churches in *Zurich*, *Stranburgh*, *Brassell*, *Berne*, *Geneva*, besides those in *Hassia* and *Prussia*.

To feed,]

First,

First, both himselfe with his peoples prayers, and other worship and obedience.

Secondly, his people with his Word and Sacraments, and other ordinances.

And to *gather lilies*; that is, to gather and call more and more faithfull Christians out of a wild field of worldly people into the fellowship of his Church, as it were, *to gather lilies into his garden.*

They are called *lilies*,

First, for their faireneſſe.

Mat. 6. 29. Pro. 12. 26. Secondly, for excellency, or eminency.

Mat. 6. 28, 29. Thirdly, for Gods care in providing for them beyond their owne labour and induſtry.

Verſe 3. *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine: he feedeth among the lilies.*

I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine.] Which words imply foure things:

First, that the Church had familiar fellowship with Chriſt in his holy publike ordinances; eſpecially in the maine doctrine of pardon of ſins by Chriſts bloud alone, and of juſtification by faith.

Secondly, that ſhee enjoyed this fellowſhip with him, before the time of her deliverance out of a *Babyloniſh*, or *Romiſh* captivity: * for the ſame words

* Chap. 2. Verſe 15.

are

are used upon the deliverance out of *Babel*, and enjoying Gods ordinances in their owne country; but with this difference: there the Church saith, *My beloved is mine, and I am his*; because, first, hee delivered her out of *Babel*, before hee gave her the free use of his ordinances; but here the Church saith, *I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine*; because shee first found Christ in his ordinances, before shee enjoyed deliverance from subjection to *Rome*; for *Luther* preached against the Popes pardons, before he rejected the supremacy of the Pope.

Thirdly, their open profession of their fellowship with Christ, when the Princes of *Germany* openly protested against the Masse, and other corruptions in the Church, and avowed the defence of the reformation begun; whence they were afterward called Protestants. Sleyden. lib.6,7.

Fourthly, Christs gracious protection of those Churches, specially in their first beginnings: for how should *Luther* (a poore Frier) have attempted and gone through with so great a work, against such great and generall opposition, and in the end die quietly in his bed, if Christ had

had not held him as it were in his armes.

Hee feedeth among the lilies.] Hee refreſheth himſelfe and ſtrengtheneth his people, converſing amongſt them, who ſtrove for whiteneſſe, and purity, and reformation.

Verſe 4. *Thou art beautifull, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jeruſalem, terrible as an army with banners.*

Thou art beautifull as Tirzah.] *Tirzah* was the chiefe city of the Kingdome of *Iſrael*, after they had ſeparated themſelves from *Judah*, untill *Samaria* was afterward builded *.

* 1 King. 14. 17. & 15. 33.

The city and Governers of it (the people having recourſe to it for judgement, rather then to *Jeruſalem*) were at firſt in diſgrace and obloquie with the *Jewes* for their ſchiſme and ſeparation from the houſe of *David* at *Jeruſalem*, and for her rebellion againſt the King of *Judah*; but this did not diminiſh her beauty, becauſe this ſeparation was from God.

Afterward *Tirzah* loſt her beauty by erecting the golden Calves, and falling off (not onely from the idolatry of *Salomon* wherein they did well, but) from the true worſhip of God, reſtored and continued

1 Kings 12. 24.

ued in the Temple of *Jerusalem*. But *Solomon* here speaketh of *Tirzah* while shee retained her beauty: And indeed the reformed Churches were in this like unto *Tirzah*; at first in disgrace and obloquie for their separation from *Rome*, and rebellion against the Emperour and other Princes; and yet nevertheless beautifull, because this separation was from God, in regard of Idolatries of the Church of *Rome*, greater then those of *Solomon*.

Thus the Duke of *Saxony* and the Landgrave of *Hassia* were proscribed as Rebels against the Emperour, and yet their cause was beautifull and good. The faithfull at that time in England were burned in King *Henry* the Eighth's daies, as Hereticks, and refractory Subjects or Rebels, yet beautifull in Gods sight.

Comely as Jerusalem.] In processe of time the Church wore out the suspicion and disgrace of heresie, and separation and rebellion, and was countenanced and adorned by Royall Lawes in the daies of King *Edward* the Sixth, and by Lawes of the Empire tolerating the Protestant Princes, so that the Church seemed as *Jerusalem*, the state of Princes, the true Church

Psal. 122, 3,—5.

Church of God, and at unity also within it self, wherein the comelinesse consisted: for, as *Jerusalem* had been three Cities, *Zion*, *Salem*, *Millo*, and all three were knit together into one *Jerusalem*: so the three differences between *Lutherans* and *Calvinists* in doctrine and discipline at *Geneva*, were all compacted together in brotherly love, in their harmony of confessions.

Terrible as an army with banners.] The Church was *beautifull as Tirzah* in King *Henry* the Eighths time, *comely as Jerusalem* in King *Edward* the Sixths time, *terrible as an army with banners* in Queen *Elisabeths* time, when the Protestant Princes grew formidable to the Emperour, *England* and the low Countries to the *Spaniard* and Pope. How terrible was that overthrow which the *Spaniard* in 88. receiv'd?

Verse 5. *chap 49.

Turn away thine eies, &c.] The eies, as above *, of the Church assembled, are the ministers, or the members considered apart; as first, knowledge; secondly, faith: In both respects the eies of the Church were wonderfull amiable: so that Christ speaketh affectionatly to the Church after the manner of Lovers, ravished with the beauty of their Spouses.

Turne

Turne away thine eyes, for they have overcome me.]

What worthy Miniſters did that firſt age of the Reformed Churches yeeld? as *Luther, Calvin, Martin Bucer, Cranmer, Hooper, Ridley, Latymer*, &c. What a wonderfull meaſure of heavenly light did they of a ſudden bring into the Church? and that out of the middeſt of darkneſſe and Popery; from whence it was, that the knowledge and faith of the Faithfull then was wonderfully enlarged farre beyond the ignorance of former times. Peter Martyr.

The eyes of the Faithfull in Chriſts time lay under their lockes, as hindered from cleere ſight by many errours; but the eyes of the faithfull, now ſeeing the truth much more plainly, are not hindered by ſuch lockes hanging over them: How cleere was their faith, that having ſeene him which was inviſible, feared not the fierceneſſe of their Kings and Princes, but endured patiently fiery Perſecutions, and bloody Maſſacres? Chap.4.1. Heb.11. 27.

Thy haire is like a flocke of goats.

Thy teeth are like a flock of ſheep which goe up from waſhing. Ver.5,7.

As a piece of Pomgranat are thy temples within thy locks.

The eſtate of common Chriſtians ſet out by the haire, and of the Miniſters ſet out by the teeth, and of the Church Governours ſet forth by the piece of Pomgranate, was the ſame in the Church reformed, as in the Primitive Church, where the deſcription of theſe parts is uſed, and here repeated only with this difference: The teeth are not ſo even cut in Reformed Churches as in Chriſts time; ſome of them exceed their Brethren in Authority and Juriſdiction, whereas thoſe were framed to more brotherly love in Chriſts time; whence the teeth they are ſaid to be even cut, which in theſe teeth is here left out; yet both the Miniſters of higher and lower ranke, were as ſheep flocking and conſorting together, waſhed with the Layer of Regeneration, fruitfull and powerfull in their Miniſtery, and therefore are here deſcribed as a flock of ſheep come up from the waſhing, *whereof every one beareth twinnes, and none is barren among them.*

Chap. 4. 1,—3.

Ver. 6.

Uſe 1. First, wee may here learne to behold a different

different estate of the Church. Sometimes it is in a Garden; sundry Christians gathered together into beds and knots, and growing up into good order together, delighting and refreshing both God and man with the savour of their sweetnesse: such was, and is the estate of the Church reformed. Sometimes again, the members of the Church scattered abroad in the wilde fields, seeking where they may finde Christ, as in the former Chapter.

The Church is here visible, as in a Garden, in some of their eminent and principall members. If then the Papists aske, where was the Church visible before *Luther?* The answer is, it was visible, not in open Congregations indeed, as it were Gardens; but in sundry members of the Church, as sweet spices and flowers, growing here and there, whom the Popes and their Instruments, like wilde Boares sought to root out, and yet God preserveth them.

The Church how visible before *Luther.*

Somtime, the Church findeth Christ comfortably in her solemne assemblies, when good Christians are met together to serve him in the simplicity of his Or-

dinances: ſometimes, when they can finde no ſuch Gardens, nor him in any place openly worſhipped, yet even then they ſeeke him here and there where they can finde him.

uſe 2. Secondly, the like uſes are here to be made of theſe Gardens, of that Chapter 4. *ver.* 14.

uſe 3. Thirdly, to teach us a true deſcription of a Church: It is, as it were, a Garden, an Aſſembly of many good Chriſtians, or Saints, as it were ſweet ſpices, or flowers, ſet in order, as it were beds, or knots, amongſt whom Chriſt walketh, they enjoying fellowſhip with him in his publique Ordinances, and hee with them.

uſe 4. *Separatiſt.* Fourthly, to refute the arrogancy, or ignorance of the Separatiſts, who refuſe to keep fellowſhip with reformed Churches, whom Chriſt yet keepes fellowſhip with; ſhall man be more pure than his Maker? or the ſonnes of mortall men more holy than the ſonnes of God?

uſe 5. Fifthly, to exclude the Popiſh Synagogues from the number of Chriſts Gardens; the Gardens and Churches of

of Christ, as they have Christ walking in them, so they know it, and professe it, and rejoyce in it.

I am my wel-beloveds, and my wel-beloved is mine.] The Church of Rome disdaines such a song as Hereticall presumption, to say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and he is mine.* Ver.3.

Sixthly, this doth teach us, that when Churches keepe themselves close to Christ, and to the simplicity of his Ordinances, that they can say, *I am my wel-beloveds, and hee is mine.* Christ will keep himselfe powerfull and gracious amongst them, for their protection and comfort; hee will not faile to shew himselfe theirs, when they faile not to shew themselves his. Use 6.

Seventhly, this may teach us, not to wonder if Christian Assemblies be at first suspected, as *Tirzah* for sedition, separation, &c. It is the lot of Gods Church, which when it groweth up to be better known, will appeare to be as it is, comely as *Jerusalem.* Use 7.

Eighthly, from the description of the Church here by her Members, Eyes, Haire, Teeth, Temples; gather here a- Use 8.

gaine in the ſame Uſes made of the like deſcription, Chap. 4. *verſe* 1,2,3. *page* in Uſes 2,3,4. there expreſſed.

Uſe 9. Ninthly, obſerve the Reformed Churches to be the ſame that the Primitive Church in Chriſts time, was in ſundry principall Members and reſpects; and therefore the ſame Members in the ſame ſort deſcribed, word for word; yea, ſuch fellowſhip as the Church of the Jewes had with Chriſt coming out of Babylon, the ſame have the Reformed Churches with Chriſt coming out of Romiſh Babylon.

Cant 2. 16. ver. 3. Chap. 6.

Verſe 8. *There are threeſcore Queenes, and foureſcore Concubines, and Virgins without number.*

This Verſe containes the laſt part of the deſcription of the eſtate of the Reformed Churches, which is a compariſon of them together amongſt themſelves; of whom ſome are,

Firſt, Queenes, and they are threeſcore.

Secondly, Concubines, and they are fourſcore.

Thirdly, Damoſels, and they without number.

Secondly,

Secondly, one is eminent above them all unto Christ: First, a Dove, Secondly, undefiled.

Secondly, her selfe one.

Thirdly, her mother, an onely choice one.

Fourthly, her daughter, blessed.

Fifthly, the Queenes and Concubines commended her.

There are threescore Queenes, and fourescore Concubines, and Damosels, *or Virgins, without number.* Vers. 8.

Queenes differ from Concubines in foure respects:

First, Queenes, or chiefe Wives are taken into fellowship with their royall Husbands by solemne stipulation, and with consent and solemne rejoycing of friends: The Concubines are not so, as *Bilhah* and *Zilphah*, &c. A man takes such to him rather by right of Dominion, than by fellowship of Wedlock. Gen. 29. 22.

Secondly, Queenes, or chiefe Wives bring with them dowries to their Husbands*.

Hence, *Lesbonius* to *Lusitoles*, in Matrimony, would not give his sister * *sine dote*, left he should seem to give her *in Concubi-*

* 1 King. 9. 16. Acts 3. Sect 2. * Without Dowrie.

natum potiùs quàm in Matrimonium: But Concubines were taken without dowry for the moſt part, as *Hagar*, *Bilhah*, *Zilphah*, &c.

Thirdly, chiefe Wives had the keyes of the families in their owne hands, they had government of the houſe under and with their husbands. Hence it is that *Hagar*, though called *Abrahams* wife, yet is ſaid to be in *Sarahs* hand, who alſo corrected her: the Angell calleth her *Sarahs* maid, and ſhee calleth *Sarah* her Miſtreſſe, as likewiſe the Angell doth.

Gen. 16. 3. Verſe 6. verſe 7. verſe 8. verſe 9.

Concubines, though ſecondary wives, yet were but as ſervants, ſave onely they were admitted to the fellowſhip of the bed.

Fourthly, chiefe Wives brought forth children, to whom belonged the Inheritance; whereas Concubines children had, for the moſt part onely, ſome gifts given them. That *Dan* and *Naphtali*, *Gad* and *Aſher*, the ſonnes of *Bilhah* and *Zilphah* had Inheritances among their brethren, was by extraordinary diſpenſation.

Gen. 25. 5, 6.

Queenes then are ſuch Reformed Congregations where ſuch properties of Queenes are found: Chriſt (indeed) lookes

lookes for no Dowrie from us for his owne use, he needeth nothing of ours, neither have we any thing to give him, but our owne nakednesse, filthinesse, and beggery. Here therefore looke at Christ in the persons of the Ministers, whose Vicegerents they are, and Embassadours also; and in whose name they being married to the Churches, doe beget children to Christ; though Ministers considered in comparison with Christ, they are but as the friends of the Bridegroome, not Bridegroomes themselves. Such Churches then, and Congregations are Queenes whom the Ministers and Congregations do with mutuall free consent chuse either the other; as when the people do give up themselves, first, to the Lord, and then to the Ministers by the wil of God. Of this sort are sundry Congregations in England, and very many in the reformed forain Churches: Other Congregations, which have Ministers thrust upon them without their liking and consent, and whom Ministers have to them by some clandestine conveyances, are more like to Concubines.

Ezek. 16. 5,—6.

1 Cor. 4. 15.

John 3. 29.

2 Corin. 8. 5.

Againe, such Congregations as come

come to their Miniſters with a good dowry, and comfortable and honourable maintenance, they are like wives. Others who bring little or no maintenance with them, are like to Concubines, though indeed the former condition is more eſſentiall to lawfull marriage; to wit, free conſent, and mutuall ſtipulation on both ſides; for as ſometimes lawfull wives have but poore dowries, and Concubines ſometimes bring large maintenance with them: ſo ſome Congregations that freely conſent to the acceptance of their Miniſters can allow them but ſlender maintenance, whereas ſome others upon whom Miniſters thruſt themſelves are richly endowed: Furthermore, ſuch Congregations as enjoy the power of the Keyes, they are as Queenes, lawfull wives. The Keyes of the Kingdome of Heaven, are

Firſt, the one of Knowledge, *Luke* 11. *ver.*52.

Secondly, the other of Juriſdiction, *Matth.*18.18. and both of them mentioned, *Mat.16.19.*

Where then a Congregation enjoyeth a faithfull Miniſtery, opening an entrance into

into the Kingdome of Heaven to penitent beleevers, and ſhutting it againſt impenitent hypocrites and ſcandalous livers, there the power of the Keyes is not wanting; and if withall they have liberty exerciſing Juriſdiction, there is their Queen-like, or Wife-like authority more compleat. Of this ſort are divers, both Engliſh and Foraine Churches, though ſundry Germane Churches diſpenſing the Keyes of Knowledge more corruptly in their Doctrine of the Sacrament, and Predeſtination, and neglecting the uſe of Excommunication, doe rather turne to the condition of Concubines.

But ſuch Churches as have no Preachers, or ſuch as have no power in their gifts to open and ſhut the Kingdome of Heaven, to the conſcience and foules of men, they are as Concubines.

Laſtly, ſuch Congregations where the people remaine ſtill ignorant in darkneſſe, and are not brought on to be begotten of God by the lively Word of Regeneration, but continue altogether ignorant, wordly, and profane; they are as Concubines whoſe children inherit not, though God may give them outward bleſſings.

But

But such Congregations where the word is lively to the begetting of soules to an immortall inheritance, they are lawfull wives, yea Queenes: Of this sort our English and Forain Churches have many, (God be blessed) though the Church of *Sardis* hath but a few names.

Rev. 3. 4.

Damosels are without number, &c.] Damosels, or Virgins in this marriage-song are of lesse reckoning, as being yet either not spoken to in way of marriage by Christ and his Ministers, or coily refusing him. Of this sort there were many Churches at the first reforming of the Gospel, to whom for want of Ministers Readers were sent; whence one of the Martyrs wished, that every able Minister might have ten Congregations committed to his charge, till further provision could be made; so that such Churches there were, even ten to one, abundantly many, that scarcely heard of Christs knocking at their hearts by any conscionable Ministery; yea, and how many be there at this day, that either doe want such Ministers as doe espouse them to Christ, or else doe coily deny their motions, and stand out against Christ and their Ministers? Of

Of Queenes hee reckoneth threeſcore, of Concubines foureſcore. A certaine number put for an uncertaine; and of Churches, the leſſe pure the greater.

Damoſels hee reckons without number.

Firſt, partly, becauſe they have been exceeding many of them, and are ſtill too many.

Secondly, partly, becauſe Chriſt maketh no account of them, as if they were with him *nullius numeri*, not worth the reckoning.

But my Dove, my undefiled is one, &c.] Verſe 9.
A Dove is noted,

Firſt, for her chaſtity;

Secondly, mildeneſſe, or innocency: Mat. 10. 10.
ſuch are thoſe Churches which goe not a whoring after any Superſtition, or Idolatry, nor exerciſe that captivity of Tyranny over their Siſter Churches, which the Popiſh watchmen are taxed for; Cant. 5. 7.
that ſmote and wounded the Members of the Churches for ſeeking after Chriſt, and took her vaile from her, which are unſpotted, undefiled, either

Firſt, of Romiſh pollutions, or

Secondly, of worldly courſes.

Is one; such congregations are,
First, few, as one to 60. or 80.
Secondly, at unity, or brotherly love one with another, as one body, though scattered into many places, as *England*, *Scotland*, *Germany*, &c. In all Christendome, some Churches are more chaste, milde, and unspotted than others, even of the same countrey; and yet such are but few, and though few, yet at entire unity, as one body.

Verse 9. *The onely one of her Mother, the choicest one of her that bare her.*] In the Hebrew phrase, the whole is the Mother, the parts are the Members. The true Catholique Church of Christ is the Mother of all Reformed Daughters; and these Daughter-Churches that are most chaste and milde, and undefiled, they are best esteemed, and best beloved of the Mother Catholique Church, as coming neerest to her in chastity, innocency, purity, &c.

Verse 9. *The Daughters saw her, and blessed her; yea, the Queenes and the Concubines, and they praised her.*] These Daughters, whether they be the members of the unspotted Churches mentioned in the former verse,

verse, either of both, together with these Churches that are as Queenes and Concubines, doe give honourable testimony of these Congregations that are most reformed, and wish them all prosperity, the good things of this life, and a better.

To blesse is more than to praise: Praise is the acknowledging of any good thing in her, but blessing is the acknowledgement,

First, of Divine good things: and

Secondly, those drawing the Churches and themselves therein neerer to God.

Who is shee, that looketh forth as the morning, &c.] In these verses, the calling and and arising of the Church of the Jewes is described by six Arguments: Verse 10. 13.

First, by the unexpectednesse of her arising, joyned with the admiration of it, *Who is she that looketh forth?* ver. 10.

Secondly, by the place of her arising, the morning or the East Countries.

Thirdly, by the degrees and beauty of her grace.

First, fresh as the morning.

Secondly,

Secondly, faire as the Moon.

Thirdly, bright and cleer as the Sun.

Fourthly, *terrible as an army with Banners*, ver. 10.

Fourthly, by Christs visitation of her with the end of it, *ver.* 11.

Fifthly, by the unexpected helpes which this Church found for her return, *verse* 12.

Sixthly, by the earnestnesse of her calling given her, *Return, Return*, foure times repeated.

Who is this that looketh forth?] These words expresse the unexpected admirable arising of a new Church; and that after the Reformed Churches of the Gentiles; she is a *Shulamite*, alluding to *Salem*, the ancient name of *Jerusalem*, the Mother City of the Jewes.

Cha. 3. 6.

This Church then thus arising, is that of the Jewes which we look for; whose beginning for sudden conversion of multitudes, shall be admirable to themselves and others.

Isa. 66. 8. & 49. 12.

As the morning.] Her arising is resembled by the morning,

Rev 16. 12.

First, because this Church shall arise from the Easterne Countries.

Secondly,

Secondly, her arising shall be like a new Resurrection from the dead. Rom.11. 15.

Thirdly, her arising shall be speedily, as the same phrase intimates. Isa.58.8. and 60, 19, 20.

Faire as the Moone, bright as the Sunne.] The Moone is faire by beauty communicated to her from the Sun. In the Suns brightnesse is light, heat, refreshing, and all in a glorious manner. The Citizens of that Church shall all at that time, or at least the body of them, have their sins forgiven them by the righteousnesse of Christ imputed to them. They shall enjoy abundant light of heavenly knowledge. They shall excell in purity of holinesse. They shall abound in consolations to the refreshing of themselves and others. Isa.6.12, 20. and 24.23. Isa 33.24 & 60. 21. Isa.59.21. Zech.14. 20, 21.

Terrible as an army with Banners.] Read *Rev.*19.14,21. The Armies of the Jewes shall be terrible to the Turkes and Tartars, and to the false Prophet then driven from Rome by ten Christian Princes, and associating himselfe to the Turke for succour. Isa.66.10, 11. Ezek.38. & 39 cha.

I went downe into the Garden of Nuts.] The Jewish Synagogues, so called, because of that voice of hardnesse and

Rom. 11. 8, 10. 2 Cor. 3. 14, 15.

blindnesse drawne over their hearts, as it were a hard Nut-shell over the Kernell.

To see the fruits of the vallies.] Valleyes lying in the shade between two mountaines, bring forth fruit late: so the Jewes are long before they bring forth fruit unto Christ.

To see whether the Vine flourished, and the Pomegranates budded.] The Jewes, that for hardnesse of heart, are like a Garden of Nuts; yet when their conversion shall be wrought, will be as Vines and Pomegranates, bring forth sweet and wholesome fruits to the refreshing of God and Man.

Judges 9. 13.

Or ever I was aware, my soule made me like the Charets of Amminadab.] Or set mee upon the Charets of a willing people; not that any thing cometh at unawares to Christ in his owne person; but becaus to his Ministers, that in his Name shall goe into this Garden of Nuts.

The Jewes shall appeare unexpectedly, prepared to embrace Christs calling: they shall finde the Jewes as Charets of willing people, ready to march with them,

them, whithersoever in Christs Name they shall call, their soule should no sooner desire it, but they should be set in all readinesse, where also is intimated the willing readinesse of a willing people among the Gentiles to convey the Jewes into their Country, with Charets, and Horses, and Dromedaries. Isa. 66. 20. and 49. 23, 24.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite: returne, returne, that wee may looke upon thee. What will yee see in the Shulamite? as it were the company of two Armies. Vers. 13.

Returne, returne, O Shulamite, returne, returne.] This call so often repeated, doth imply, Isai. 62. v. 67.

First, the earnestnesse of the Ministers that shall call them.

Secondly, the haste that they would have them to make in going through with their conversion.

That wee may looke upon thee, or behold thee.] It is the desire of the Ministers, and of all the faithfull, to behold this glorious Church when shee shall be called.

What will ye see in the Shulamite?] But, as it were, the company of two Armies, or the hoste of *Mahanaim*. Gen. 32. 1, 2.

This is spoken, either because the Jewes shall, presently upon their conversion, marshall and ranke themselves into Armies against *Gog* and *Magog*, *ver.* 10. where she is said to arise *terrible as an Army with Banners.* Or else taking the word properly; the holy Ghost compareth the Jewes to an hoste of Angels, which *Jacob* saw at *Mahanaim:* as indeed the feeble at that day shall be as valiant as the Angels of God. This Interpretation seemeth to me to be the more likely, because her warlike provision was before mentioned, *ver.* 10. Or, otherwise, the holy Ghost may allude to the hoste of Israel and Judah, which went to bring up *David* from *Mahanaim* to *Jerusalem*, after the Israelites were brought to see their errours in casting him off for *Absolom:* So shall the Jewes at their conversion assemble for the establishment of the Kingdome and Throne of Christ among them, after they shall be brought to see their foule errours in casting off Christ so unworthily so long a time.

Gen. 32. 1. Zech. 12. 8.

2 Sam. 19. 9, 10, 14, 43.

Use 1. The first Use of this is for discerning a different estate of all Christian Churches and Congregations, and triall of our owne

owne Pariſhes. In one of theſe rankes every Congregation is found, either a Queene, a Concubine, or a Damoſell, or a Dove: If we have freely conſented to the entertainment of a faithfull Miniſtery, coming to us in the Name of Chriſt; if we bring with us to him a ſufficient dowry for his maintenance: If the Word of God ſhall be powerfully diſpenſed amongſt us, and the opening and ſhutting of the Kingdome of Heaven, and withall the Key of Diſcipline be not neglected: If our Congregations bring forth many children to God, partakers of the Heavenly Inheritance, then are our Congregations as chiefe Wives, as Queenes to Jeſus Chriſt. But if our Miniſters finde not conjugall and free acceptance from us; if we be not willing to provide for them comfortable and honourable maintenance: If the Word be not ſo diſpenſed that the people may finde themſelves in good or evill eſtates: If our Congregations bring not forth regenerate Chriſtians to partake of the heavenly Inheritance, then are they but as Concubines in the ſight of God:

2 Cor. 5. 20. If wee have yet no Ministers that woo us, and beseech us to be reconciled to Christ, or if they doe, yet we coily put them off with delayes, or refuse; then are wee Damosels, but neither Queenes nor Concubines. But if wee finde all the properties of Queenes belonging unto us, and withall, finde a love and care to keepe our selves chaste to Christ, and innocent to man, and undefiled, and unspotted, both of the World and of *Rome*, then are we Doves to Christ Jesus, choicest children of the true Catholick Church.

Use 2. A second Use is for a discerning of a different estate of all Christian soules, and triall of our owne estates before God; if our hearts have never yet been called and knocked at by the lively Word of Gods Ordinances, or if wee have coily put off our Repentance to this day, or refuse to hearken to Christ, then are we Damosels. If we bring forth seed of Righteousnesse to Christ, by reason we are under the government of such who will require it, and well may command it of us, we are but as Concubines. But if we freely

ly condescend to receive and embrace Christ into our hearts with entire conjugall affection, and give up our selves to him to bring forth the fruits of his Spirit, and are enabled to governe our selves and families after his will, then are wee Royall Spouses unto Christ Jesus, and keep our selves to Christ chaste, innocent, and undefiled, and endeavour to *cleanse our selves from all filthinesse of flesh and spirit*; then are wee as Doves unto Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 7. 1

A third Use to direct and instruct Ministers and people how to approve themselves and their Congregations in best sort unto Christ. Let not Ministers thrust themselves upon their people against their consents, but let their people freely accept them, and comfortably maintaine them: Let the Ministers be faithfull in dispensing Gods Ordinances, and the people obedient, to give up themselves to Christ and his truth, till both grow up to heavenly and holy purity of worship and life; so shall our Congregations be as Queenes and Doves to Jesus Christ. Use 3.

A fourth Use may be to encourage Use 4.

men to waies of ſpotleſſe Innocency; they are not diſgracefull, but bleſſed of the Faithfull, and praiſed, even of them that are without.

uſe 5. Fifthly, to reprove the children of the Separation, who reproach the Church in ſtead of bleſſing or praiſing them.

uſe 6. Sixthly, this may teach us to expect a powerfull and glorious calling of the Jewes in all the particulars before deſcribed: ſay, They be now, as *Gideons* Fleece, dry; when the Gentiles are moiſtened with heavenly dew, they ſhall again be moiſtened when we ſhall ſeem dry in compariſon of them. Though *Leah* ſtep firſt into *Jacob's* Bed, and ſo the leſſe comely Church of the Gentiles into the fellowſhip with Chriſt; yet the Church of the Jewes, as beautifull as *Rachel*, ſhall in the end finde fellowſhip with Chriſt.

The glory of their calling appeares in the Text, becauſe the holy Ghoſt deſcribes her by compariſons, not fetched from earthly flowers, or metals, or jewels; but from heavenly lights, the Morning Moon, Sun.

It appeareth further in their unexpected and free readineſſe to embrace Chriſt.

The

The power of their calling appeares in their earneſtneſſe and zeale of their Miniſtery, in breaking the hard ſhell of their hearts wherewith they were formerly incloſed, *ver.* 11. In ſtirring them up to fight manfully, and terribly Gods battels againſt the enemies of the Church, *ver.* 13.

The Lord ſpeedily haſten the coming of this *Shulamite*, that we may behold her, *Amen.*

THE

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 7.

How beautifull are thy feet with shooes, O Princes Daughter! the joynts of thy thighes are like Jewels, the worke of the hands of a cunning workman.

2 *Thy navell is like a round goblet, which wanteth not liquor: thy belly is like an heap of wheat, set about with lilies.*

3 *Thy two breasts are like two young Roes that are twins.*

4 *Thy neck is as a tower of Ivory: thine eyes like the fish-pooles in Heshbon, by the gate of Bathrabbim: thy nose is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.*

5 *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple, the King is held in the galleries.*

6 *How*

6 *How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!*

7 *This thy stature is like a palme tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*

8 *I said, I will goe up to the palme tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.*

9 *And the roofe of thy mouth like the best wine for my beloved that goeth downe sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleepe to speake.*

10 *I am my beloveds, and his desire is towards me.*

11 *Come, my beloved, let us goe forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages.*

12 *Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appeare, and the pomegranats bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.*

13 *The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

THE

The Explanation.

THis Chapter to the end of the fourth verse of the eighth Chapter, describeth a foure-fold estate of the Jewish Church. When they shall come to be converted unto the Lord: to wit,

First, as it shall be in gathering and growing up, *ver.* 1,5.

Secondly, as it shall be, growne up to her Stature and Maturity, *ver.* 6,7.

Thirdly, as it shall be further enlarged by the accesse of the Gentiles, *ver.* 8,10.

Fourthly, as it shall multiply and stretch it selfe into the Country villages, and throughout the Land of Israel, *vers.* 11. —*ver.* 4. of *Chap.* 8.

That in *vers.* 11. the Church inviteth Christ, and with him her selfe to have recourse into the Country villages, is plaine in the words of the former verses, which set forth a three-fold estate of the *Shulamite* converted, is evident by the Repetition of the verses, *verse* 3,7,8. and all with some difference; and the breasts are so described, *verse* 3. and set forth an unsettled Ministery, quickly stirring up and

and downe to gather this Church and the ſcattered Members of it.

This Church then in gathering, is deſcribed by ten parts; Feet, Joynts of Thighes, Navell, Belly, Breaſts, Necke, Eyes, Noſe, Head, Haire.

How beautifull are thy feet with ſhooes, O Princes Daughter! the joynts of thy thighes are like Jewels, the work of the hands of a cunning workman. Verſe 1.

How beautifull are thy feet with ſhooes, O Princes daughter!] In her feet ſhod with ſhooes there is a three-fold beauty: for it implyeth,

Firſt, her returne out of Captivity; as on the contrary, bare feet is a ſigne of going into Captivity.

Secondly, her challenging and recovery of her loſt Inheritance in Iſrael, *Ruth* 4. ver. 7, 8. Iſai. 20. 1,—4. Deut. 25. ver. 9.

Thirdly, her walking in that peace of conſcience which the Goſpel prepareth: whereas he that walketh bare-foot, either gathereth a thick brawny skin upon the ſoles of his feet; or if his feet be more tender, hee pricketh them ever and anon with thornes, or little ſharp ſtones, as ſcruples: a conſcience not furniſhed with Eph 6. 15.

true

true peace, either waxeth senslesse and brawny, or else scrupulous and anxious: all the three things are beautifull and glorious; as on the contrary, it is a great disturbance and deformity to goe into captivity, to sell and foregoe a mans Inheritance, to walke unquietly and uncomfortably: and if it be beautifull and glorious to returne out of bodily captivity, and to recover the earthly Inheritance; how much more is it together with these outward things, to joyne a returne out of spirituall captivity, and recovery of an everlasting Inheritance, as the Jewes shall doe at their conversion?

O Princes Daughter!] So called,

First, because they are borne of God, the Prince of Princes.

Secondly, the Jewes converted shall be of much glory and authority, even as the Kings of the Earth.

Revel. 16. 12.

The joynts of thy thighes, &c.] The word signifies whole bones of the thighes; they, for their apt and ready turning in their conversion to God, are like well wrought precious Jewels, the work of the hand of God, the Spirituall workman

man of all the workes of the Church.

Thy navell, &c. thy belly is like the navell, &c.] The navell and belly are both hidden parts, not conſpicuous to them without; and therefore ſet forth the two Myſteries, or Sacraments of the Church, Baptiſme, and the Lords Supper. The Navell, ſerving for the nouriſhing of the Infant in the wombe, reſembleth Baptiſme, nouriſhing Infants, and new born babes in the womb of the Church.

It wanteth not liquor:

Firſt, of the Spirit of Chriſt to ſanctifie and cleanſe us from ſin.

The belly: to wit, the Lords Supper, is as an heap of wheat, for ſtore of excellent, and ſweet, and fine nouriſhment, ſet about with lilies; becauſe onely the faithfull pure Chriſtians ſhall be admitted to partake in that Sacrament.

The Lords Table ſhall not be ſet about with weeds, profane and ſcandalous ſinners, but with *Lilies*, worthy Communicants.

Thy two breaſts (the Teachers of that Church) *are like two young Roes:* For their agility, skipping up and down to ſuckle the converts; implying that the firſt Miniſtery

niſtery of the Jewes, at the converſion of that people ſhall rather be as the Evangeliſts, bound to no certain place, than as Paſtors fixed to any ſettled Congregation, which yet outwardly they ſhall be.

That are twins.] Firſt, for their likeneſſe in diſpoſition.

Secondly, brotherly equality.

Verſe 4. *Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory: thine eyes like the fiſh-pooles in Heſhbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim: thy noſe is as the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damaſcus.*

Chap.4. verſe 4. *Thy necke is as a tower of Ivory.*] The neck (as above) is the faith of the Church, joyning Chriſt and his Church together, as the neck doth the head and body.

As a tower, for ſtrength; *of Ivory*, for precioufneſſe, for which faith is commended.

1 Pet.1.7. 2 Pet.1.1.

Thine eyes are like the fiſh-pooles in Heſhbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim.] For the abundance of water, meaning teachers, that they ſhall yeeld even teares of Repentance at their converſion; partly, for the

the great wrong they had done our Saviour; partly, to consider the unspeakable and undeserved kindnesse of God towards them.

Zech. 12. 10. Jerem. 3. 8,—9. & 50. 4.

Thy nose is like the tower of Lebanon, which looketh toward Damascus.] There was a double house of the Forrest of *Lebanon*, the one in Jerusalem, built by *Solomon*, so called by way of resemblance: in which hee put his golden shields, whence *Shishak* taking them, is said to take them out of Jerusalem: of this House speaketh *Isaiah*, Chap. 22. ver. 8.

1 King. 7. 2. & 10. 17. 1 King. 14. 25,—26.

There was another House built in the forrest of *Lebanon*, as appeareth by this place, which is said to look toward *Damascus*, to distinguish it from the other which is in Jerusalem.

Lebanon it selfe stood in the utmost Confines of Israel, Northwards towards Syria: and therefore this House built in *Lebanon* is said to look toward *Damascus*, the chiefe City of Syria. Now *Lebanon* being full of all manner of sweet and fragrant trees, and shrubs, and spices; the tower built in *Lebanon* must needs be compassed with the sweet smelling odours, to the great refreshing and de-

light of such as should lodge in it.

Hence the nose of this pure Church is compared to this tower, because they that dwell in this Church shall be wonderfully refreshed with the sweet odours of the Ministery, which is the sweet savour of life unto life: as also with the savoury conference of good Christians, and their faithfull and godly conversation.

2 Cor. 2. 15.

Verse 5. *Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the haire of thine head like purple, the King is held in the galleries.*

Thine head upon thee is like Carmel.] *Carmel* excelled for fruit, and fulnesse in feeding cattell, and therefore is reckoned with *Lebanon*, and *Sharon*, and *Bashan*, famous for fertility.

Isa. 33 9. and 35. 2. 1 Sam. 15. ver. 17.

The head of the Church under Christ is the Civill Magistrate. The meaning then is, that the Magistrate of this Church shall yeeld store of sound and sweet nourishment to the people, by giving and maintaining free passage to each holy Ordinance of God, and also by wholesome Lawes; and lastly, by good example of godly life.

The haire of thy head like purple.] The haire;

haire; whether it be the common Christians of the Church that hang upon Christ, or the Officers or Servants that hang upon the Magistrates of that Church, they are like purple.

Firſt, not onely died in crimſon blood of Christ. Isa 33.14. and 63. 1.

Secondly, but alſo of a royall hue, as purple is a princely dye; all of them as Princes. Cant 7.1. Zech. 12. ver. 8. Revel. 16. 15.

The Officers and Exacters ſhall be Peace and Righteouſneſſe. Isa. 60 17. and 18.

Theſe Officers ſhall not baſely ſharke for bribes, nor exact for fees, nor oppreſſe for filthy lucre, nor picke holes in mens eſtates to trouble the people and enrich themſelves; but like purple cloathed Princes, be like their Miniſters, and honour both their Miniſters and themſelves with Peace and Righteouſneſſe.

The King is held in the Rafters.] For ſo the word is turned before, where the Rafters were underſtood partly of the Temple. *Held*, is alwaies (to my remembrance) uſed for holding by conſtraint, bound as a Priſoner. The meaning may be then, That the King, or chiefe Magiſtrate is bound to be preſent Cant 1. 17.

Ezek. 46. 10. at the Ordinances of God in the Temple. The Prince is commanded to goe in with them, when they goe out, hee shall goe out with them together; hee shall come in with the first, and go out with the last. Or what if it imply that their greatest Magistrates shall submit themselves to be bound with the Censures of the Church, according to that where the

Psal. 149. 6, 8, & 9. v. Isa. 49. 23. Psalmist telleth of binding of Kings with the Ordinances of God in the Church. And *Isaiah* foretelleth that Kings and Queenes shall bow downe their faces towards the earth unto the Church, and licke the dust of their feet, both their Interpretations stand well together.

Use 1. First, this doth shew us how to come and appeare beautifull in the eyes of the Lord Jesus: which is when we turne our feet from the estate and wayes, and bondage of sinne and Satan, and come out of the captivity into the liberty of his children, when we claime our Inheritance of the Kingdome of heaven, seeking after it above all earthly blessings, and walking towards it; when we walke confidently in a Christian course, then Christ admireth

reth our beauty. How beautifull are thy goings with shooes, *O Princes Daughter!* Yea, Christ then esteemeth us as Princes children: what matter then if foolish men account us Peasants, and our going with shooes as straight in the instep? But wee stand not, nor fall not to their judgements, but to his who shall judge us to eternall happinesse, or misery at the last day. His word must not stand when heaven and earth shall fall: If he account us vessels of honour, wee are so indeed, who is it that dishonoureth us? If men should cast a vessell of gold or silver into the mire, and trample upon it, yet the vessell is still a vessell of honour, good, and rich, and precious; the mire may easily be washed off from such vessels. Be not discouraged then from Christian courses by foolish feares of reproach: The truth is, if wee goe on in sinne, Christ esteemeth of us as base peasants, as ugly and abominable in his sight, naked, bare, deformed, and defiled; yea, he esteemeth our goings as going bare-foot, which either, first, brawneth our feet with a thick skin, that thereby we grow insensible and feele nothing: or secondly, pricketh us with unne-

Mat. 5. 18.

2 Tim. 2. ver. 21.

cessary scruples and feares.

Use 2. Secondly, we may from hence observe to whom the praise of the conversion of the forwardest Christians is due; to wit, to the hands of a cunning workman, the God of power and peace. We might be also called as often to recall the, as the *Shulamite* in the last verse of the former Chapter: and yet unlesse this cunning workman put the bones of our thighes into joynt, we shall not returne to him.

Use 3. Further, see here the use of Baptisme, even to infants. The Anabaptists object, that Infants can receive no benefit by it, because they yet receive no understanding, no benefit by the Word: As if Infants cannot receive nourishment by the Navell, though they can neither take, nor chew, nor sucke meat with hand or mouth: Baptisme is the Navell by which Infants are nourished in the Church.

Use 4. Fourthly, from this Navell, never wanting liquor; observe, there doth never want just matter of instruction and comfort to be fetched from our Baptisme against all temptations. Doth Satan detaine thee from obeying thine effectuall calling: Remember in Baptisme from

Comfort in Baptisme.

thine

thine Infancy thou wast admitted into the family of Christ; doth hee trouble thee with feares and doubts, that thy sinnes are not pardoned? Behold thy Baptisme is full of liquor of Christs blood, to justifie thee from all thy sinnes: Doth Satan tempt thee to defile thy selfe with any sin? Behold thou art washed solemnly in Baptisme from all sinne, and wilt thou defile thy selfe against thy Baptisme?

Fifthly, in the Lords Supper, see what plenty of excellent, sound, and sweet nourishment is offered to us, even an heap of wheat: *Christs flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed.* There is al-sufficient nourishment for an hungry soule; this serveth to quicken our appetite to this heavenly banquet. use 5. John 6. 55.

Sixthly, observe what manner of persons should be admitted to the Lords Table, and how wee should prepare our selves thereto. This heap of wheat is not to be set about with stinking weeds, but with faire lilies: Cleanse our selves then from all scandalous sinnes, yea, and from all secret sinnes, to our best endeavours, so shall wee be set about use 6.

this heape of wheat, the Lords Table.

Seventhly, note that Ministers, to be like Roes skipping up and down to gather and suckle the children of the Church, is fitter for a Church in gathering, than convenient in a Church constituted; for then the breasts hang in their place like clusters of Grapes upon the branches of the Vine, v. 7, 8. But they must be breasts giving suck, not dry nurses; that is their duty in every estate of the Church. Or, if their people be grown up in Christ to fitnesse for strong meat, then they to be full in a stronger liquor than milke, as clusters of Grapes, full of wines.

Eighthly, see the beauty and commendation of three cardinall graces:

First, Faith, to be

First, strong.

Secondly, precious, applying the precious promises, and making us rich with them.

Secondly, Repentance to abound in brokennesse of spirit through godly sorrow, melting into abundance of teares, or other affections futable thereto.

Thirdly, Obedience, to be

First, fragrant.

Secondly,

Secondly, and that with all manner of sweet fruits and good; that all that converse with us may smell a sweet savour from our conversation.

Ninthly, marke here a lesson for Magistrates, to be as *Carmell*, yeelding some sweet and plentifull nourishment to the people. use 9.

First, by procuring free passage to Gods Ordinances, whence *Jehosophat*'s Nobles are said to teach. 2 Chr. 17. & 7.9.

Secondly, by making wholesome Lawes.

Thirdly, by giving good example of life, to have no Officers hanging about them of base demeanour, exacters, promotors, contentious persons, but such as may execute it themselves and their Ministers, and for publick Ordinances of Gods worship; it is no disparagement to Magistrates to behave themselves reverendly in them, and to submit themselves unto them as unto Christ.

Tenthly, from this compleat description of the beauty of the Church in all her parts; observe, use 10.

First, that the Church was never so compleatly beautifull in all her parts, as it

it shall be when the Jewes are called. The Apostolique Primitive Church, though all faire, yet wanted this head-like *Carmel*, a Christian Magistrate, yea and some
1 Cor. 11. 20. & 14. purity of the Sacrament.

Secondly, in that he beginneth this description from the feet, and so ascendeth to the head in order: It may seeme the calling of the Jewes shall begin at first, rather with some of the lowest people, and so ascend higher and higher to more eminent persons.

Thirdly, in that the Church neither here (where so many of her members are set forth) nor in all this Song is described, by the beauty of her hands, or fingers, wee must not gather that therefore this Church will be barren of good works, God forbid, but rather conceive, Christ concealeth the mention of her hands, to wit, her works, partly,

First, because the Harlot of *Rome* so delighteth so much to boast of her hands, of her workes, which indeed shee wants: Christ had rather his Church should abound in good workes in silence, than boast of them, especially when they are wanting.

Secondly,

Secondly, because it is he alone (and not wee) *that worketh all our workes for us.*

Isa. 26. 12. Hos. 14. 8. Joh. 15. 5.

Cantic. 7. vers. 6. ——vers. 4. of 8. Chap. How faire, &c.

In these verses the holy Ghost goes on to describe the second estate of the Jewes Church, as is spoken above, *Chap. 7. ver. 1.* in *ver. 6, 7.* as growne up to her full stature and maturity.

For first, beauty is not observed till full growth; how here her beauty is admired, *verse 6.*

Secondly, her stature is expressely mentioned to be a Palme-tree, *ver. 7.*

Thirdly, her breasts are here mentioned againe, *ver. 7.* shew that he speaketh not of the same estate of the Church as afore. Besides, the breasts yeelding wine in stead of milke, it is a signe the Church shall then be grown to more maturity and sicknesse to be fed with stronger meat.

The Church of the Jewes then come to her fuller growth is here described,

First, by her beauty, which is admirable, *How faire!* and joyned with pleasure, *How pleasant art thou!* especially for publick worship so described, *ver. 6.*

Secondly,

Secondly, by her stature, resembled to a palme tree, *ver.* 7.

Thirdly, her breasts resembled to clusters of Grapes, *ver.* 7.

The third estate of this Church, as it shall be further enlarged by the accesse of the Gentiles, is described, *ver.* 8, 10. and that

First, by Christs climbing this palm-tree, and taking hold of the boughes of it, *verse* 8.

Secondly, by the rich supply of nourishment from her breasts, *ver.* 8.

Thirdly, by the smell of her nose, resembled to Apples, *ver.* 8.

Fourthly, by the power of her Doctrine, *ver.* 9.

Fifthly, by her familiar fellowship with Christ, *ver.* 10.

The fourth estate of this Church, as it shall multiply, and stretch it selfe into the Country villages, is described, *verse* 11. to the fourth of the next Chapter, and that

First, by the occasion of this encrease, the Churches invitement of Christ to visit the Country villages, *ver.* 11, 12.

Secondly,

Secondly, by the affectionate service of this Church to Christ. *Chapter* 8. *ver.* 1, 2.

Thirdly, by Christs affectionate embracing of her, *ver.* 3.

Fourthly, by the Churches desire for the continuance of this estate without interruption, *ver.* 4.

How faire, and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights!

How faire!] The faireneſſe and beauty of the Church implyeth ſutably to what is found in the naturall beauty of the body.

First, a compleat integrity of all the Members of this Church; where any Member is wanting, there is deformity, beauty is blemiſhed. This Church ſhall want then no Ordinances of God, nor any ſuch Members to whom the diſpenſation of each Ordinance belongeth.

Secondly, a fit proportion of all the Members of the Church one to another; no ſwellings, no convulſions.

Thirdly, a good colour in the outward face of things, all carried decently, and in order: *How faire!* It implyeth admirable beauty in all theſe reſpects.

How

How pleasant for delights! This word implyeth a ready willingnesse of this Church to the publique worship of God, which is here called delights, as being the marriage bed wherein Christ most familiarly solaceth himselfe with his Church.

Psal. 110. 3. This ready willingnesse of this Church was fore-told, and the willingnesse of this people to any service of his is pleasant to

2 Cor. 9. 7. him.

O love! As if the Church were so lovely, that it were even love it selfe.

The five former verses described the Church in her severall Members apart. This verse considereth the whole body met together in publick duties.

Verse 7. *This thy stature is like to a palme-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes.*

This thy stature is like to a Palme-tree. This tree is eminent,

First, for her straightnesse.

Secondly, for her taleneſſe.

Jer. 17. 8. Thirdly, for her perpetuall greennesse and fruitfulnesse, as that

Fourthly, for her thriving under weight pressing it down.

Fifthly, for her easinesse to be climbed,

bed, having many boughes, whereon to stay hands and feet: So shall the Church be eminent for uprightnesse therein, for growing up even against all oppositions of *Gog* and *Magog*, for ready entertaining of all the faithfull that shall come to her.

Plin. li. 13. cap. 4.

Thy breasts are like the clusters of the vine-grapes.] Their Ministers such like in four respects:

First, not few, as afore, two young Roes, but many, as clusters.

Secondly, not stirring up and down, as Roes, from place to place, but hanging in their places.

Thirdly, full of strong liquor of sound Doctrine.

Fourthly, requiring some pressure in urging (though little) before they empty themselves, but upon easie pressure doing it plentifully.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof: now also thy breasts shall be as clusters of the Vine, and the smell of thy nose like apples.

Ver. 8.

I said, I will goe up to the Palme-tree, I will take hold of the boughes thereof.] Christ speakes of himselfe to imply the readinesse

readinesse of his members to resort and flock to this Church of the Jewes, for what Christs members doe by the guidance of his Spirit, hee accounteth it his own action. This forwardnesse of the Gentiles to ascend and resort to Jerusalem, is elsewhere fore-told more plainly*.

* Zech. 8. 23. Isai. 60. 8. 11.

Nor also thy breasts as the clusters of the vine.] And that is notwithstanding the plenteous accesse of the Gentiles to the Church. Here shall be no defect of Ministers to teach and feed them all, but there shall be still a large supply of store, sweet and plentifull Teachers, as clusters of Grapes to refresh them all.

And the smell of thy nose like apples.] Notwithstanding this plenteous accesse of the Gentiles, the life of common Christians incainted with heathenish and popish unsavory pollutions; yet the Church her self, and they that live in it shall smell a fragrant savour of the good conversation of the people.

The smell of thy nose.] Not which the nose yeeldeth, but which is yeelded to the nose, to thy savoury discerning shall be sweet and comfortable, as that of apples.

Before,

Before, when this Church conſiſted of her owne people, her ſmell was as that of *Lebanon, ver.* 4. and now by the acceſſe of the Gentiles it ſhall not be corrupt. Indeed when the Iſraelites came out of Egypt, the mingled of the Gentiles with them, drew them away to murmuring and luſting; for this compare *Exodus* 12. 38. with *Numb.* 11. 4. But no ſuch contagion ſhall accrue to this Church by the mingling of the Gentiles with them.

And the roofe of thy mouth like the beſt wines, for my beloved, that goeth down ſweetly, cauſing the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak. Verſe 9.

And the roofe of thy mouth like the beſt wines. Hebr. *Like good wine, going to my beloved moſt ſtraightly and rightly.*] That is, the Doctrine of the Church ſhall be as ever any moſt ſweet and powerfull, and comfortable, and generous wine; it ſhall ever goe, or tend directly to Chriſt, alwaies aiming at the preaching of him.

To goe rightly, or ſtraightly, implyeth the ſtrength and generouſneſſe of wine, when it ſparkleth upward in the cup, as *Proverb.* 23. 31. which here expreſſeth the lively vigour of the Churches Doctrine,

in her preaching of Chriſt, *cauſing the lips of thoſe that are aſleep to ſpeak.* Such ſhall be the ſweet and powerfull efficacy of the Doctrine of the Church then, as ſhall cauſe the ſleepy and drowſie profeſſors, whether amongſt us Gentiles, or amongſt the Jewes, to open their mouthes and ſpeak plentifully to Gods praiſe. When the Apoſtles ſpake (the wonderfull works of God) in ſtrange tongues, ſome of the people thought them to be full of new wine, but they were deceived, and were willing ſo to account of them in mockery. But theſe people ſhall be full of new wine of the Spirit and Word of God, to open their mouthes to ſpeak as the Apoſtles did, the wonderfull workes of God.

Act. 2. 11, 13.

Verſe 10. *I am my beloveds, and his deſire is towards mee.*

This profeſſion of the Church, that ſhe is her beloveds, argueth,

Firſt, her familiar fellowſhip with Chriſt.

Secondly, her faith, or confidence of her intereſt in him, or his in her.

Thirdly, her open profeſſion of the ſame.

That his deſire is towards her, argueth the

the strength of his affection toward her, and it is the same word used *, which there implyeth two things:

Gen. 3. 16. & 4. 7.

First, the strength of their affection to their husband, and their elder brother.

Secondly, the subordination and dependance thereof upon their will: the former is here also meant, the latter doth not stand with the Soveraignty and Headship of Christ over his Church: Unlesse thus farre, to intimate Christs tender regard of the will and desire of his Church; as hee would be as unwilling to deny them, as loving husbands be to deny their wives any thing.

Ephes. 5. 23, 24.

Come my beloved, let us goe forth into the field: let us lodge in the villages.

Verse 11.

In these words, the Church inviteth Christ to visit the Country villages about her, implying,

First, her prayers to Christ, that with her he might lodge there, plant and set Churches there.

Secondly, her care to take and observe all opportunities to advance such a work.

Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender

Ver. 12.

grape appeare, and the pomegranats bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.

Verse 12. *Let us get up early to the vineyards, let us see if the vine flourish.*] Meaning if any opportunity should offer it selfe, to plant Religion amongst them; then Christ and shee might be forward to further the same.

Thirdly, her promise to Christ to employ her best endeavours to such a service.

There will I give thee my loves.] The Joh. 21. 15. love of the Church to Christ is especially seen in feeding his Lambes and Sheep: She therefore offereth to Christ free use of her deerest and best affections to set forward such a work.

Fourthly, her discerning of some good beginning of such a work.

Verse 13. *The Mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.*

The Mandrakes give a smell.] Which is Gen. 30. 14. a Country field herb, yet amiable, which argueth some fruits to be gathered in the Country.

And at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits,

fruits, new and old.] And therefore, out of the abundance of her owne ſtore, ſhe can ſupply the Country with all fit helps, to her further gathering and eſtabliſhment.

Which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved.] She profeſſeth her deſire to employ all her ſtore to Chriſts advantage, and therefore abounding with Miniſters, and other fit Officers for gathering and eſtabliſhing the Country Churches about her, ſhe expreſſeth her readineſſe to bring them out to his ſervice and uſe, as if they were ſome good houſhold proviſion, laid up by her for ſuch a uſe. The acceſſe of the whole Land of Iſrael to the City is profitable. The Land ſhall be called *Beulah*, as well as the City *Hephzibah*, ver. 10. A Cauſey is caſt up for a mutuall recourſe of Country to City. Iſai. 62. 4.

THE CANTICLES, OR SONG OF SONGS opened and explained.

The Text.

Chap. 8.

O *That thou wert as my brother that sucked the breasts of my mother! when I should finde thee out, I would kisse thee, yet I should not be despised.*

2 *I would lead thee, and bring thee into my mothers house, who would instruct me: I would cause thee to drinke of spiced wine, of the juyce of my pomegranate.*

3 *His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me.*

4 *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that yee stirre not up, nor awake my love untill hee please.*

5 *(Who is this that cometh up from the Wildernesse, leaning upon her beloved?) I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there she brought thee forth that bare thee.*

6 *Set*

6 *Set me as a ſeale upon thy heart, as a ſeale upon thine arme: for love is as ſtrong as death, jealouſie is cruell as the grave: the coales thereof are coales of fire, which hath a moſt vehement flame.*

7 *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it would utterly be contemned.*

8 *We have a little ſiſter, and ſhe hath no breaſts, what ſhall we doe for our ſiſter, in the day when ſhe ſhall be ſpoken for?*

9 *If ſhe be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of ſilver: and if ſhe be a doore, we will incloſe her with boards of Cedar.*

10 *I am a wall, and my breaſts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour.*

11 *Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hamon, he let out the vineyard unto Keepers: every one for the fruit thereof, was to bring a thouſand pieces of ſilver.*

12 *My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) muſt have a thouſand, and thoſe that keep the fruit thereof, two hundred.*

13 *Thou that dwelleſt in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cauſe me to heare it.*

14 *Make haſte my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountaine of ſpices.*

The Explanation.

THe Church of the Jewes, both in City and Country thus gathered, doe here expresse her ardent affection to Christ, and due respect of him, which the old Synagogue shewed towards her whilest he was conversant amongst them in the flesh. (Since saith she) *O that thou wert as my brother, &c.* Christ was made our brother by taking our Nature upon him at his Incarnation, and then he sucked the breasts of the Church, attending to the Ministery of *John*, and other Jewish Teachers: she therefore to shew her affection, desireth that he were now amongst them conversant in their streets againe in bodily presence, she would not doe then as the old Synagogue did, be ashamed of him, or come to him by night; but shee would kisse him, and embrace him in the open streets, and yet no man should then despise her for her so doing, as they did; but every one should encourage her in her obsequiousnesse to him: She would not reject him, and thrust him out of the Synagogue, as her old Ancestors had done;

John 4. 48, 49.

Luke 4 28, 29.

done; but if she found him without, shee would lead him, and invite him into their Synagogue, or Temple, there to instruct her, and teach her the will of her father; she would not give him gall to eat, and vinegar to drink, as her forefathers had done; but she would cause him to drinke of the best delicate spiced wine, and the juice of her Pomegranate. Mat.27. 34.

His left hand should be under my head, and his right hand should embrace me. Verse 3.

The left hand of Christ is the Christian Magistrate, which shall in those daies support and advance the Church, and hold up her head.

His right hand is the faithfull Ministers, which shall speake comfortable things to her heart, and so embrace her, *Isai.62.* for this also see, * *I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you stirre not up, nor awake my love untill he please.* Ezek.33. 23,24,25. Dan 7.27. * Cant.2. 6.

The Church enjoying these great mercies and blessings from Christ, chargeth all her daughters, members, to walk so thankfully, and fruitfully towards God, and lovingly and helpfully one towards another, and so circumspectly, and inoffensively to them which are without, that no

no occasion be given of their alteration of their happy estate. When the Church gave this charge before, it was in regard of the Roes and Hindes of the field; fearfull Christians coming on towards Religion, willing to flock, and feed, and converse with the sheep, yet ready to start and flee away upon any feare of danger of persecution; but now no regard is had of these fearefull ones; for they that shall then remaine fearefull, when the Church shall enjoy so great light and safety, they shall be quite excluded from conversing with the Church.

Chap. 2. verse 7. Chap. 3. verse 5.

Isai. 65. 25.

For use, we may here learn,

Use 1.

First, since the Church of the Jewes shall attaine to so great beauty, it ought to kindle our desire to pray earnestly for their conversion, that we may behold the admirable faireneſſe thereof, and be delighted with her consolations.

Isai. 66. 11, 12.

Use 2.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to approve our selves pleasant and faire in Christs eyes, even by keeping his Ordinances in integrity, and simplicity, and by a willing readineſſe to frequent the same.

Christ may see all the world, as he did when

when Satan * ſhewed it to him, and yet not admire it, yea, condemne it for vanity, as it is * 4 but a well ordered Church, and ready, he admireth.

*Mat. 4. 8, 9. Luk. 4. 5, 6
*Eccl. 1. 2, 14. & 2. 11, 15, 17, 19, 22, 26.

Thirdly, here learn the more ſtraight and ſincere, the more patient and meek, the more faithfull, the more fruitfull in all holy obedience, &c. the more doe we attaine to a Palm-tree, like full ſtature of Chriſtianity. Uſe 3.

Fourthly, it may learne and direct Miniſters to apply themſelves to the eſtate of their people: If they be babes in Chriſt, to be as breaſts of milke to ſuckle them: If they be grown to ripe yeares, to be as cluſters of grapes to refreſh them with ſtronger liquor, be ready to poure out ſweet and comfortable liquor, but ſee ſome good calling to preſſing you to it, let all your Doctrine direct to Chriſt, and diſpenſe it with ſuch powerfull efficacy of the Spirit, that the drowſie ſluggard may be raiſed up to ſome fruitfulneſſe, and more holy walking towards God. Uſe 4.

Fifthly, this may teach townes well provided for, to lend their beſt care and help for the edifying and calling home of Country Uſe 5.

Country villages: Grudge not then at their ready reſort to the gate of your Aſſemblies, but rather encourage them, that they may be partakers with them.

Uſe 6. Sixthly, this lets us ſee, that time ſhall come when forward profeſſion ſhall be no diſgrace; yea, men ſhall kiſſe Chriſt openly, and ſhall not be deſpiſed.

Uſe 7. Seventhly, the malignity of our Anceſtors againſt Chriſt and his Goſpel, muſt provoke us to more embracing of him, and more ſubjection to him.

Uſe 8. Eighthly, we may here ſee that a faithfull Miniſtery, and godly Magiſtracy is a pledge of Chriſts tender love, and kinde embracing of the Church.

Uſe 9. Ninthly, we are hence to take notice, that when a Church enjoyeth many gracious and ſweet bleſſings from Chriſt, it is good for her to ſee it and acknowledge it, and to be carefull that all her Members may ſo walk, as their happineſſe be not interrupted. In the fourth verſe the charge runneth thus, *That yee ſtirre not up, &c.* But in the Hebr. *Why ſhould you ſtirre up, &c.* As who ſhould ſay, when all things are throughly and fully reformed and ſetled: Why ſhould you goe about any Innovation?

Innovation? This manner of charge was never uttered before, *Cant.2. ver.7.* to the end.

(*Who is this that cometh up from the Wilderneſſe, leaning upon her beloved?*) *I raiſed thee up under the apple-tree: there thy mother brought thee forth, there ſhe brought thee forth that bare thee.*

Who is this that cometh up from the Wilderneſſe?] In theſe words the holy Ghoſt ſetteth out the calling and eſtate of two other Churches after the calling of the Jewes:

Firſt, the one ariſing out of the Wilderneſſe, *ver.5,7.*

Secondly, the other a little ſiſter, *ver.* 8,10. together with the eſtate of the whole Church, as it ſhall then ſtand, from that time to the end of the world, *verſe* 11,14.

This Church coming up from the Wilderneſſe is diſcribed,

Firſt, by the unexpectedneſſe of her ariſing, together with the admiration of the Jewiſh Churches there, *ver.5. Who is this that cometh up out of the Wilderneſſe?*

Secondly, by the place of her ariſing, the Wilderneſſe.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, by her familiar fellowship with Christ, joyned with her confidence on him, *leaning upon her beloved.*

Fourthly, by the meanes of the gathering and raising of this Church, *I raised thee up under an apple-tree, &c.* ver. 5.

Fifthly, by her earnest desire of his deep affection to her, and continuall remembrance of her, *Set me as a seale upon thine heart, as a seale upon thine arme,* ver. 6. which petition of hers is urged by a motive, taken from the strength and depth of her affection to him, which she proveth,

First, by comparing her affection as equall to three things most strong,

First, Death.

Secondly, to the Grave.

Thirdly, to vehement flames of fire, *verse 6.*

Secondly, by comparing it to two things as lesse than her affection, though they be also of great force,

First, to many waters, which cannot quench her affection of love.

Secondly, to the whole substance of any mans house, which would be contemned if it were offered to withdraw her from Christ, *ver.* 7. The

The calling and estate of the other Church, the little sister, is described by three passages,

First, by the consultation of the elder Sisters; to wit, of the Jewish Churches, and of that Church coming up out of the Wildernesse, what they shall doe for her when she shall be spoken of, *ver.8.*

Secondly, by a resolution what they shall do for her, sutable to what her condition (as they shall finde her) shall require, *ver.9.*

Thirdly, a satisfaction given by this little sister, to the elder, how her estate standeth, together with the cause thereof, Gods favour, that they may the better know what courses to take for her, *v.* 10.

The estate of the whole Church, as it shall stand after the conversion of the Jewes, and of those other Churches is set forth;

First, from Christs care for them, expressed,

First, in his watchfulnesse over them in his owne person, which he amplifies by the lesse care which *Solomon* had of his vineyard, committing the keeping of it to others, *ver.*11,12.

Secondly,

Secondly, in his charge to the Church, that he may heare her companions harkning unto her, *ver.* 13.

Secondly, by the Churches prayer unto Christ, that hee may haſten the tranſlating of them into heaven in the end of the world, *verſe* 14.

Who is this that cometh, &c.] Who theſe Churches ſhould be that remaine to be called after the converſion of the Jewes and Gentiles, wee cannot conceive any more fitly than the Churches of *Aſſyria*, ſecondly, of *Egypt*, of which wee read *Iſa.* 19. 23, 25. When a Church ſhall be elected among the Jewes, ſignified by *Ezekiels* goodly Temple, the water of Gods Spirit ſhall flow from thence Eaſtward, goe downe into the Deſert, and from thence ſpread themſelves farre and neere.

Ezek. 47. 1, 9.

This Deſert, or Wilderneſſe Eaſtward from *Judah*, is the wilderneſſe of *Arabia*, whither Spirituall graces ſhall be conveyed by ſome coming from *Jeruſalem*, and from thence they ſhall be further carried into the Eaſt Countries, to the gathering, and converſion of the *Aſſyrians* and others: Whence it is, that Church ariſing from

from the Wilderneſſe of *Arabia*, is ſaid to leane upon her beloved in an *Arabian* word; as when the holy Ghoſt was to ſpeak of the *Babylonian* Captivity (or Winter, being paſt, he uſeth the *Babylonian* or *Caldean* word. So then, when the Churches of *Judea* ſhall ſee ſuch a goodly Church ſpring from ſome ſmall helpe, out of the Wilderneſſe of *Arabia*, beyond their expectation, they ſhall ſay of her, *Who is this that cometh out of the Wilderneſſe, leaning upon her beloved?* truſting by faith on him, and thereby attaining and enjoying fellowſhip with him: for to leane is put as an act of faith or truſting *, and the geſture implyeth familiar love *. Cant. 2. 11

* Pro. 3. 5. * John 13. 23. & 20. 20.

I raiſed thee under an apple-tree.] Chriſt, or the Church of the Jewes by his power raiſed up his Church by the meanes of ſome inferiour Magiſtrate, reſembled here by an Apple-tree, as before *: For though hee was not ſo high and mighty as the Cedars of *Lebanon*, or the Okes of *Baſhan*; yet eminent hee was, and his ſhadow good, and his fruit cordiall and comfortable.

* Cant. 2. ver. 3.

And the meanes of the gathering of this Church, being at firſt but an inferi-

our Magistrate; the Church had more need and use of faith to leane upon her beloved, when soveraigne authority did not countenance the work.

There thy mother brought thee forth.] To wit, the Mother-Church of the Jewes, or the Catholique, which is the Mother of us all.

Gal. 4. 26. Verse 6.

Set me as a seale upon thy heart, as a seale upon thine arme, for love is strong as death, jealousie is cruell as the grave: the coales thereof are coales of fire which hath a most vehement flame.

Set me as a seale upon thine heart, as a seale upon thine arme.] That is, let me be deep engraven as a seale is into thine heart, or affection, and as a seale on thine arme, let me be continually in thy sight and remembrance. And because the heart is the seat of the will, and the arme of strength, therefore shee desireth his deep affection and mighty strength and power alwaies to be present with her for her comfort and peace.

For love is strong as death.] Death sheweth his strength,

First, in subduing all sorts of people high and low, young and old.

Secondly,

Secondly, accepting no compassion, nor yeelding to any opposition, but going through with his work; such strength of love shall this Church shew to Christ, subduing all before her to the obedience of Christ, and not suffering any impediment to detaine her from him.] *Jealousie is cruell as the grave.*] Jealousie is a mixt affection of zeale or fervent love, and carries at any corrivals, a rage with wrath against them: So fervent then shall the zealous love of this Church be to Christ, that she may not endure any such things as shall steal away the peoples hearts from Christ, or alienate or lessen his affection to her, but as the grave,

First, she shall devoure all such things, and bury them out of sight, And

Secondly, there hold them under for ever.

The coales thereof are coales of fire, which have a most vehement flame.] The ardency of this love shall as coales of fire,

First, enflame her in all her services to Christ.

Secondly, burne up as stubble all impediments.

First, all inward green lusts.

Secondly, outward entanglements.

(*Vehement flame*) Hebr. Flames of God, that is, excellent or extraordinary; for in Scripture phrase, the things of God are transcendently excellent, as the Harpes of God*, the Trees of God*.

*Rev. 15. 2 Psal. 1. 3.

Flames of God, divine and vehement; and indeed this vehement love being kindled by Gods heavenly Spirit, cannot be quenched with earthly things.

Verse 7. *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drowne it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.*

That is, neither adversities, though never so many, or deep, or strong, as many waters and floods, shall withdraw this love from Christ; nor all the treasures, and pleasures, and credit, which the substance of any mans house might procure us, shall be of any reckoning in comparison of Christ, to withhold our hearts from him.

Verse 8. *We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister, in the day when she shall spoken for.*

We have a little sister, &c.] The Church of *Judea* and *Assyria* hearing of some good people

people growing up & coming on in *Egypt*, they are solicitous what course to take for them for their growth and establishment.

A little sister.] In comparison of the Jewes or Assyrians, for but *five Cities in the Land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and one of them shall be called the City of destruction.* Isa. 19. 18.

And she hath no breasts.] No Ministers to give to them the sincere milk of the Word or the meanes of consolation in their oppressions and distresses. 1 Pet. 2. 2. Isa. 9. 20.

In the day when shee shall be spoken for.] When the fulnesse of time shall come, that she shall grow up to such a multitude of Professors, as may be fit to have a settled Church established amongst them; for there is a company grown up to be a fit Spouse for Christ. When there are so many good Christians as may constitute a well ordered Church.

If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver: and if she be a doore, wee will enclose her with boards of Cedar. Verse 9.

If she be a wall, we will build.] That is, if she have a Christian Magistracy; for the Magistrate is a wall.

First, high, to keep out invasions of

enemies; even so doth he keep our forain evills from breaking in upon his people.

Secondly, close to keep in his people within bounds from breaking out into disorder.

Thirdly, firme, whereon to reare (if occasion be) *a silver Palace*, whereon to lay the frame of a good motion, or course to be taken for publick good.

Fourthly, a wall of partition, to divide between right and wrong, to give every man his owne.

Wee will build upon her a silver palace.] Wee will make her garment honourable and wealthy.

If she be a doore.] That is, if she have faithfull Ministers, which as a door open the way to Christ, that the people may goe in and out, and find pasture in him: *Wee will inclose her with boards of Cedar.*] Cedar is a timber that will neither rot, nor breed worms, and so will endure alwaies; whence it was that the Heathen made their *Simulachra deorum*, Images of their gods of this wood, to make them seeme eternall. These Sister-Churches then promise, that if their little Sister of *Egypt* have any faithfull Ministers, they will

Plin. lib. 13. cap. 5.

will provide for their safety and peace, that they be not discouraged, nor disturbed in their function.

I am a wall, and my breasts like towers: then was I in his eyes as one that found favour. Verse 10.

The little sister of *Egypt* resolveth her sisters, that she wants neither Christian Magistrates, nor faithfull Ministers; so full of wholesome Doctrine, as that her breasts swell like towers; which yet shee acknowledgeth to be a singular mercy and favour of Christ, and ascribeth all her store to his praise: *Then was I as one that found favour in his eyes.*

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Hamon: A place so fruitfull, that for excellency it was called the Lord of a multitude, or the owner of great encrease. Hee let out the vineyard to keepers, who paid him a great rent, even thousands for the fruit of it, and yet had a good portion, certaine hundreds for their own paines. Verse 11.

My vineyard which is mine, is before me: thou (O Solomon) must have a thousand, and those that keepe the fruit thereof, two hundred. Verse 12.

To wit, I let not out my vineyard to

others, but I kept it my selfe alwaies; let *Solomon* take his thousands for his fruits of his vineyard, and the Reapers their hundreds; I will not so doe, but take all the paines to keep my vineyard, and reap all the gaines of the fruits thereof to my selfe. The meaning is, when Christ hath gathered all these Churches of the Jews, Assyrians, Egyptians, and neighbour-Nations, he will then keep his Church with his mighty power, that neither Dragons, nor wilde Bores, nor Foxes shall hereafter root it up, or make havock of it, as in time past they have done: This is expressly foretold, and shall come to passe after the destruction of *Leviathan* the great Turke *.

*Isa. 27. 1, —3.

Verse 13. *Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it.*

Thou that dwellest in the gardens.] The Participle being of the Feminine gender, sheweth that it is the Church not Christ that is here spoken to, who is said to *dwell in the garden*; to wit, in the particular Churches, as the sea dwelleth in each particular Countrey sea; the German sea, the Spanish sea, the Baltick sea, &c. So

&c. So the Catholick Church is divided into particular Churches, or the Jewish Mother Church dwelleth by her authority and directions in all other Churches.

The companions hearkning to thy word (or voice) *cause me to heare it.*] So the words in the originall which implyeth either that Church would have the Mother Church of the Jews take care of all other Christian Churches, and give directions unto them, and yet not as unto her handmaids, but as to her companions; or else if the words be read according to the translation, *The companions hearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it:* They imply, that after the calling of these Churches, this shall be their constant estate to the worlds end, as they shall all

First, embrace one another as companions, not claiming Romish Supremacy.

Secondly, hearken to the voice and directions of the Mother Church, (in *Solomons* daies for wisedome to him.)

Thirdly, continue in calling upon the Name of Christ without dissipation and interruption to the end.

Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like to a Roe, or to a young Hart upon the mountain of spices. Verse 14.

This

This is the prayer of all the Churches; now that all things are accomplished, the which Prophets and Apostles have fore-told, that Christ would hasten his last coming as swiftly and quickly, as the swiftest of the creatures, *the Roe, or young Hart*, to take them up with himselfe into the highest Heavens of the Mountaines of spices, where are all manner of spices, where are all manner of sweet and fragrant and pleasant things, even fulnesse of joy at Gods right hand for evermore. Thus is the end of the Revelations. *The Spirit and the Bride*, and every faithfull soule saith in like sense, *Come Lord Jesus, come quickly.*

Psal. 16. 11.

Rev. 22. 17, 20.

The Use of this is, first, to teach us that the Nations of the Gentiles shall not be cast off from the fellowship of the Church, when the Jewes are called, as the Jewes were out of the Church, that the Gentiles might be grafted in *; but even after their calling, new Churches of the Gentiles shall be brought in; yea, their conversion shall bring from the dead into the world: *What shal the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?* yea, *the Gentiles shall bring their glory to it*, yea, the cursed

Use 1.

* Rom. 11. 19, 20.

Rom. 11. 12, 15.

Rev. 21. 24.

curſed Canaanite ſhall not be excluded from partaking in this bleſſing*. How much more may we hope then that theſe Churches of Chriſtendome, which have ſuffered ſo much with Chriſt, and for him, under the Dragon, the Beaſt, and the Turk, ſhall partake with the glory of theſe Churches of the Jewes when the time ſhall come. *Ezek. 16. 55,60,61.

Secondly, this doth teach us how to attaine fellowſhip and holy familiarity with Chriſt, even by faith, leaning upon him as our beloved; infidelity and doubting hinder our ſweet communion with Chriſt, labour wee therefore to abandon it from us. uſe 2.

Thirdly, wee may here ſee the duty of inferiour Magiſtrates what it is, even to ſee that the Church be raiſed up under them, how much more to countenance and protect it with their ſhadow, and to comfort it with the fruit of their ſweet and wholeſom lawes and examples? uſe 3.

Fourthly, this may ſerve for tryall of the goodneſſe of our affections to Chriſt; if we thirſt after his deep affection to us, and continuall remembrance of us, if we labour to ſubdue our ſelves and all ours to uſe 4.

to him, if wee jealously warre against all that which might impaire our love to him, if we burn up all our impediments, if no afflictions can discourage us from him, if no prosperity can shake our intire desires after him, we are then well affected to him as this Church is: If we desire to have such deep place in Christs heart, it is a plain signe Christ hath a deep place in our hearts.

Use 5. Fifthly, this may shew us a meanes how to consume all base and kitchin-loves and lusts in us, set upon these sensuall worldly things; grow up in this spirituall love to Christ, and it will swallow up and consume these lesser fires; the greater light will extinguish the lesser, as the Sun will put out the kitchin fire; so this strong fire of Christs love in us will burn up, and eat out all lust in us.

Use 6. Sixthly, this may comfort the true Church and children of God, in assurance of their perseverance: if our love to him be so unchangeable, that many waters of afflictions cannot quench it, nor floods of temptations drown it; if it be so strong as death, that it will devour all before it, how much more is his love to us. Seventhly,

Seventhly, this lets us see that the Churches that are well established themselves, must not contemne their weake neighbour-Churches, but take care, and use all good meanes for their establishment and growth. How farre should greater Churches be from cutting off the breasts, or breaking downe the walls of their small neighbour Churches? use 7.

Eighthly, this may teach Magistrates to be as walls to keep out all disorder, stand up as a wall if there come in disorders, stand so high that they cannot come over; if any would goe a begging, keepe them in; restraine beggery, idlenesse, drunkennesse, whordome, and profanenesse, all evill courses, be as a wall, whereon to reare a silver Palace for ever; whereon to lay the frame of a good motion, course, or order, to be taken for the publick good, any good motion made, or to be made, is as a wall to divide equally to all men their right. use 8.

Ninthly, this may teach Ministers to be as doores to open a wide entrance for the people to come to Christ; not as those Scribes and Pharisees, which use 9.

which Christ complaines of *, which neither enter in themselves, nor would suffer others: such are rather Port-cullises, yea, gates of Hell.

* Luk. 11. 52.

Use 10. Tenthly, this may let us see the duty of Magistrates, if Ministers be doores, it should be their care to hemme them in with boards of Cedar, to provide for their security: it is the duty of every Magistrate and member to hemme them in, that no enemy may be able to oppose them, but that they may be without feare among them, as it is *, *See that Timothy be without feare among you.*

* 1 Cor. 16. 10.

Use 11. Eleventhly, this may let us see, a Church enjoying a faithfull Ministery, and a Christian Magistracy, enjoyeth a speciall favour from Christ.

Use 12. Twelfthly, this lets us see what great care Christ will one day have of his Church, though Lyons, Dragons, and Beares have broken in upon the Church to devoure it, and besides many Foxes have sought to subvert it, and to cut the sinewes of it asunder, yet when Christ shall take the government of it into his hands, there shall be no enemy to offer violence to it: When the great *Leviathan*

than shall be punished; even *Leviathan* that crooked Serpent, and the Dragon that is in the sea shall be slaine; *In that day sing ye unto her, a vineyard of new wine*; yea, the Lord will keep it, he will water it every moment, lest any hurt it, he will keep it night and day; yea, Christ will one day free his Church from all oppression, and give free passage to all his ordinances. Isa. 27. 2.

Finally, this serves to teach us all what affection we should have to the coming of Christ to Judgement, to desire him to be as the *Roe or a young Hart upon the mountains of spices*; to take us up into the highest heavens, where are all manner of sweet and fragrant and pleasant things, *even fulnesse of joy for evermore*. Use 13.

The faithfull Spouses of Christ doe earnestly desire his coming to Judgement, but Harlots would put off his coming: A chaste wife, and a loyall Spouse desires her husband to send no more letters, but to hasten his returne, and come home; but a harlot would have her husbands coming deferred; so they whose hearts are a whoring after the world, neither desire Christs coming, nor love his appearing. Psa. 16. 11. 2 Tim. 4. 8.

appearing. That we may therefore shew and approve our selves to be the true Spouses of Christ, desire his hasty coming, and say, as *Revel.* 20. 20. *Even so come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen. The Lord work this good work and frame of grace in our hearts, for Jesus Christs sake, Amen. Alas who shall live when God doth this?* Numb. 24. 23.

FINIS.